

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

Sci-fi & Fantasy

OIL PAINTING TECHNIQUES

◆ O M N I B U S ◆

INTRODUCTION BY GREG HILDEBRANDT



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Sci-fi & Fantasy
OIL PAINTING TECHNIQUES
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Introduction by Greg Hildebrandt



I first met Patrick at ILLUXCON in 2008. My first impression was that he is a very nice young man who can paint. My lasting impression is of his art. I say lasting impression simply because his work stands out among many other very talented artists who can also paint. In my opinion there are many reasons for this. Patrick has a fire and a passion in his art that very few have. His understanding of anatomy, design, composition and lighting is excellent. His technique and style are brilliant. But mostly his art is magical. It pulls you in and speaks to you. Ah, young and brilliant, maybe I should get back to work.

Greg Hildebrandt, New Jersey. 2012

Greg along with twin brother Tim, famously known as The Brothers Hildebrandt, created the fantastic The Lord of the Rings calendar illustrations and the original Star Wars movie poster., inspiring a generation of new artists. Today Greg creates art for his American Beauties online store: <http://americanbeautiesart.com/>

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The Long Road Home AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY



As a young lad (right) with my good friend Sean Black in front of Buckingham Palace, circa 1986. An unlikely artist, straight from Ireland's building sites. The locals regarded us as shirtless barbarians. Sean went on to be a university lecturer in Sweden teaching business. Me, I simply painted pictures...

When I was fifteen years old my uncle bought me a copy of 'The Savage Sword of Conan' featuring inside the fantastic pencil and ink art of John Buscema and Alfredo Alcala, and even more stunning... the incredible art of Boris Vallejo on the cover. In that moment I knew I wanted to be a fantasy illustrator.

It was a bitter winter morning a few years later in 1984 when I boarded the Larne to Stranraer ferry from Ireland on my way to London. Alone with a paltry £100 in my pocket and an oversized drawing board tied to my back I foolishly set out for the big smoke with no real plan other than to be a sci-fi/fantasy illustrator. It was a long journey as I couldn't sit down, so I stood instead, frozen to the top deck outside, guiding the ship like a snowbound Frankenstein's monster, across the Irish Sea.

Running on dreams near-starvation and homelessness soon followed my arrival in an Orwellian, dank and dreary London. I sold myself into building site slavery for a pitiful weekly wage and by night painted in the dim light of a Spartan bed sit. My dreams of becoming the next Boris Vallejo or Frank Frazetta looked bleakly unattainable.

Salvation literally came in the darkest hour just as the coin-fed electricity meter shut off. It was in the form of a phone call from honey-voiced art director, Janette Diamond, who held in her hand a cheaply printed self-promotional postcard that I had mailed off months before when my dreams were still kicking. Could I come see her tomorrow to discuss painting the covers for some sci-fi paperback books? A quick flick through my blank diary and I had a date for nine o'clock the next morning at Orbit Books.

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Smelling or cheap soap I walked into the boardroom and was treated as a human being for the first time since leaving the Emerald Isle. Dazzling them with false confidence I walked outside onto Tottenham Court Road and into the first warm day of London's long hot summer, contract in hand.

At the corner of Oxford Street I sat down and stared at the contract with tears welling as the unseeing throng passed by. The fee was over six times my weekly slave wage. I was a free man.



Book jacket artworks painted in my early twenties. Awkward looking today, but nostalgic. Top left was my first commission from Orbit Books. I posed for the conquering hero... which was exactly how I felt at the time.

I rented studio space with the first professional illustrators I had ever met, and taking a deep breath rolled up my sleeves and got down to the serious business of illustration.

One book jacket followed another. I had an agent now and rarely left the studio. As I was putting the finishing touches to one artwork, another manuscript would land on my desk. These were the glory days and I thought they would never end. Then, without fair warning, the country went into recession and the bottom fell out of the Sci-Fi & Fantasy market. I needed to find a new source of illustration work if I was to survive.

Pounding the London pavements, portfolio in hand, I tramped past the oppressed, dust covered Irish navvies digging up the road to the tune of a foreman swearing like it was a national sport. Was this to be my fate again? I was determined not to make it so. I found greeting card work which killed all hope of fantasy related projects, it was also ill paid making it a weekly struggle to cover my bills. Worse still, even the greeting card market was drying up. Six poverty-stricken months followed as I put a new folio of ad type work together. I caught a train north to Manchester and just as the chimes of doom were sounding, I secured one of the biggest advertising artists' agents in England and rented studio space with the giants of advertising illustration.

The Studio was always filled with laughter and camaraderie. I admired these new friends but it didn't stop me ribbing them unmercifully when it was my turn. I learned from them and became 'A Man of Many Styles' I was with my peers and a full-time illustrator again.

As the years sped by I watched the vast advertising machine chew up thousands of little illustrations, all forgotten save for a few fading copies gathering dust in an old 'analogue' portfolio. I realized I had slowly let my fantasy art dreams die. Optimistically I moved back to London to give fantasy art another shot but found a rain-soaked city in decay. I decided to backpack through the sun-baked lands of Israel and Egypt, finding adventure and romance amidst the pyramids with my future wife, Cathy until endless summers led us to sub-tropical Australia, which I now call home.

Australia was a cultural surprise after a diet of misleading 'red dust and kangaroo' Chips Rafferty movies. I was taken completely off guard by it's urban sophistication and decided to aim high and apply for a job as art director/studio manager in Brisbane's gleaming, glass-towered city.

The C.E.O. was impressed with the cut of my jib and led me into the studio to meet the underlings. To my horror they were sitting in front of Apple computers. All I could hear was air rushing through my head, carrying away the voice of my prospective employer who was speaking in strange tongues about me being responsible for data backup etc. I was sunk.

With shame, I confessed I knew nothing about computers and left with my head down. All that was left for me to do was to take it on the chin, so I put on my big boy's pants and went back to school, enrolling in a digital arts course at the local college.

The college campus was peopled by bright young things taking their first steps in the big world. Still in my thirties I felt young and fit but when I entered the classroom the students looked at me as if Grandpa Walton had shuffled in. I sat in front of a dark computer screen mortified while the kids clickity-clicked like crickets. Peter, the instructor, asked me if everything was okay and I had to tell him that I couldn't turn the blasted thing on. However, three short months later and I was bringing digital commissions into the classroom.



Example of Patrick's digital art painted in Corel Painter for the deluxe version of Frankenstein. Commissioned by Easton Press.

With cable internet I now had a toy which shrunk the publishing world into my new Mac powered home studio. In London Sci-Fi & Fantasy book jacket work was still dead in the water with cover illustration being almost all Photoshopped in-house, but in the land of the free great art still adorned the covers. After years of painting advertising art for a living, grasping at every fantasy-themed ad job, I awoke from my slumber and secured an artists' agent in New York.

Then it started again, one book jacket after another, all Sci-Fi & Fantasy art. And so began my return to the genre I loved. Fate had also intervened when my old teacher, Peter Kewon, asked me to teach figure drawing to fashion students. It was a treat to be out of the studio in a country as beautiful as Australia. Before long I was teaching digital art, which in turn resulted in what is now the sixth year teaching my Sci-Fi & Fantasy Masterclass.

All this I was thankful for, but I never gave up my love of oils and was determined to keep painting traditionally when time permitted, even though the lure of digital commissions made things faster and easier. What happened next put me back on the path I started at fifteen years old, when out of the blue came... IlluXCon.

What follows in these pages are the oil paintings, insights, stories, thoughts, and Masterclass techniques used in preparation for IlluXCon and the further commissioned work resulting from this life changing show, plus advice along the way for every aspiring oil painter, illustrator and gallery artist following their own dreams....

Patrick Jones. Brisbane, Australia, 2013



Pat as fellow guest artist alongside his childhood hero, Boris Vallejo. IlluXCon, Pennsylvania, 2008



Another example of Patrick's digital art painted in Corel Painter for the deluxe version of Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep. Commissioned by Easton Press.

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Illustrator
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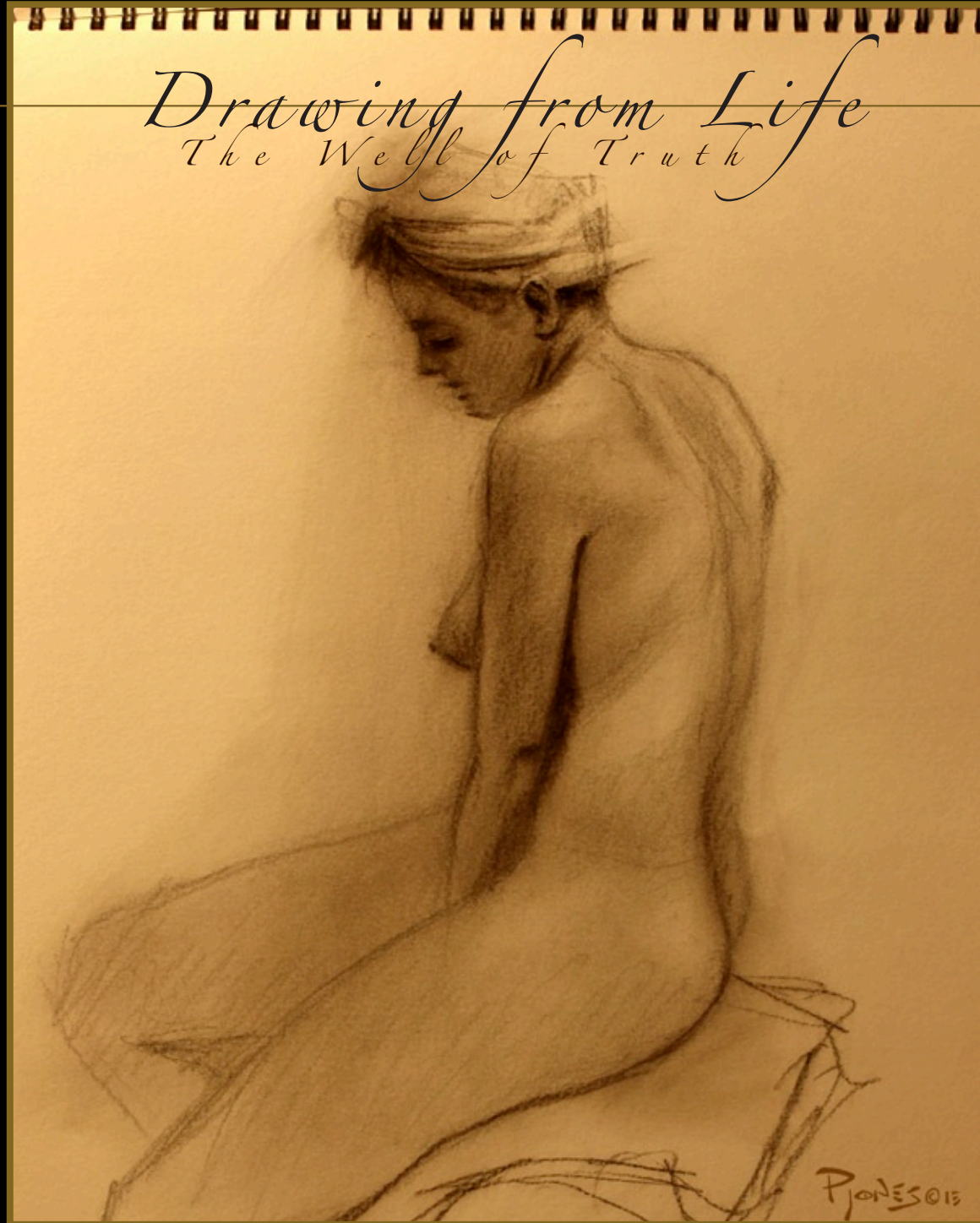
Part One

FOUNDATION

The artist's Workshop

"The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work."
— Émile Zola (1840-1902)

Drawing from Life *The Well of Truth*



There are two kinds of artists; those that study anatomy, and those that reason, 'Why study anatomy when the camera does it for me?' I can always spot the latter. How? Because the camera lies. Lens distortion and shadows confuse the artists that rely totally on photography, which frustrates them, causing anatomical guesses and mistakes. By ignoring the foundations of figurative art they are, in short, not living the truth. There is nothing wrong with using photographic reference, but you must be aware of its shortcomings and be able to adjust for them. The shame is not only are these artists setting themselves up for a life of artistic hardship (of which I was once a young victim too) but they are missing out on the spiritual well of artists: to simply draw the human figure for the love of it.



The main reason artists skip life drawing classes is that it takes up precious time that could be spent painting from photos. But that kind of thinking is a time-saving false economy. Time spent on life drawing and anatomical study speeds up the painting process because of the catalogue of information your mind stores from each session. Another reason artists skip life drawing is that it's not easy to begin with, and if you are out to impress people who have only seen your photo-referenced work it can be humbling. Best to cast the fear of judgement aside and jump in. I've never met a life drawing group that wasn't totally supportive of everyone regardless of their skill level. If cost is an issue I can understand that reason completely, especially as an artist starting out or not having the privilege of being born in a First World country. If this is the case, then draw a friend or fellow artist. There are not many free experiences that can beat that kind of quality time. So before any painting commences the first thing to do is pick up a pencil and draw...

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And so to technique. There are many ways to approach drawing from life. My way is an amalgamation of techniques taught by great art teachers such as Andrew Loomis, (1892-1959) and George B. Bridgeman, (1865-1943), plus a blend of my own discoveries. When you first stand in front of a live model the fear of empty space is daunting. Trying to tackle proportion straight off the bat is a tough challenge. Best to first capture 'gesture'. Gesture is the flow of lines that run through and around a figure. On the left is a two minute gesture drawing I did for my art students. Try to capture the flowing lines without worrying about proportion; letting the lines run-through each other is key (ie: don't try to draw a careful outline). A gesture drawing that's out of proportion will still look more interesting than a careful outlined drawing. The drawing on the right is a gesture drawing with shadowed areas added by finger smudging and erasing.

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a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



Proportion is probably the hardest challenge. Some artists hold up a pencil at arm's length and run their thumb along to measure body parts. I choose to use the head and other body shapes as a measurement, for instance the distance from chin to nipple equals one head for most models. Fig a. I've worked out proportions using square shapes and circles then ran imagined lines to find other points of reference, for example in this case a line dropped vertically from the center model's nose touches the nipple. Fig b. You can see squarish shapes still visible in the hair and can note the torso is four heads high; chin to nipple, nipple to navel, navel to crotch. Fig c. The left figure with square shapes rounded off and working lines erased, and the right figure with shading added. Fig d., uses gestural circle shapes to find form with soft shadows added. Fig e. You can see here the shoulders are three heads wide and that the forehead, eyebrow to nose, and nose to chin are roughly equal thirds.

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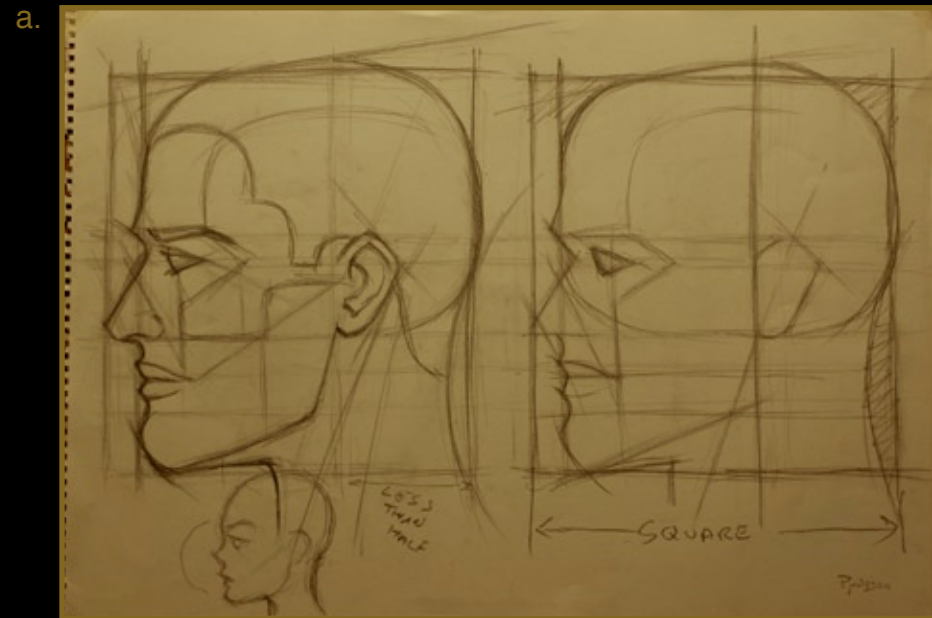


Fig a., shows a breakdown of imaginary sight lines to find proportions of the human head. On the right side head I've drawn the basic shapes. On the left side head I've added more guide lines for students to follow in step. I was able to draw the heads live without a model as I'd spent many hours studying from life and from books such as the Loomis source mentioned previously. The little female head was added off the cuff as a student asked what the difference was between male and female heads. The answer: not much, generally the chin is less broad and the forehead usually less chiseled with softer line changes. **Fig b,c,d**, are torso and head studies. In **Fig c** you can see the broad side of a large charcoal has picked up the sketchbook paper.

Working on portions of the body can take the pressure off trying to draw the full figure within posed time periods, which in general are between ten and twenty minutes. **Fig e**. Two fifteen minute poses. Fifteen minutes is longer than you think as long as you keep drawing the whole time. Here you can see strong hits of Andrew Loomis' influence in my work in that I'm keeping 'fuzzy' mid-tones to a minimum and concentrating on extreme contrast to create solidity.

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Itreat life drawing as an exercise and not as a set of precious drawings (although some will turn out that way), hence each drawing running into the next. If you fear each drawing it will come out 'stiff'. If I'm finished drawing before the model changes pose I will sometimes draw a caricature based on the model, or just from the imagination. My materials are simple, mostly charcoal or pastel pencils from 2b upward. It's best to teach your hand to use pressure for light lines rather than using a pencil grade lower than 2b. Tissue paper is good for smudging and dry paper better than slick.

The great thing about drawing is the freedom, it can be done anywhere. The sketchbook pages above, and many more, were filled on a recent trip to New York. A quick search of the internet found life drawing groups all over Manhattan, most every day, and all I needed was some paper, a 2b pencil and a kneadable eraser. Most cities and towns will have a school or private gathering for life drawing. The average cost is the price of a cinema ticket, but If you are broke there are meet-up groups on the internet that 'meet-up' at art galleries and parks to draw for free.

An Artist's Palette

An artist's style can be defined in some regard by their colour palette. Artists like Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947) for instance placed more emphasis on colour strength than on value (darks and lights). That was his style. If you convert his art to greyscale it can be confusing sometimes to understand what's going on, but this didn't matter as it was not how his art was meant to be viewed. With my style I rely on value for initial impact as my work is less graphic. This does not mean I disregard colour as secondary to value as I place both in high regard, but for me value comes before I think of colour. Some may describe my work as having a limited colour palette, but this would be untrue as I use lots of colour variation, especially in skin tones, a more accurate description would be of a muted colour palette.

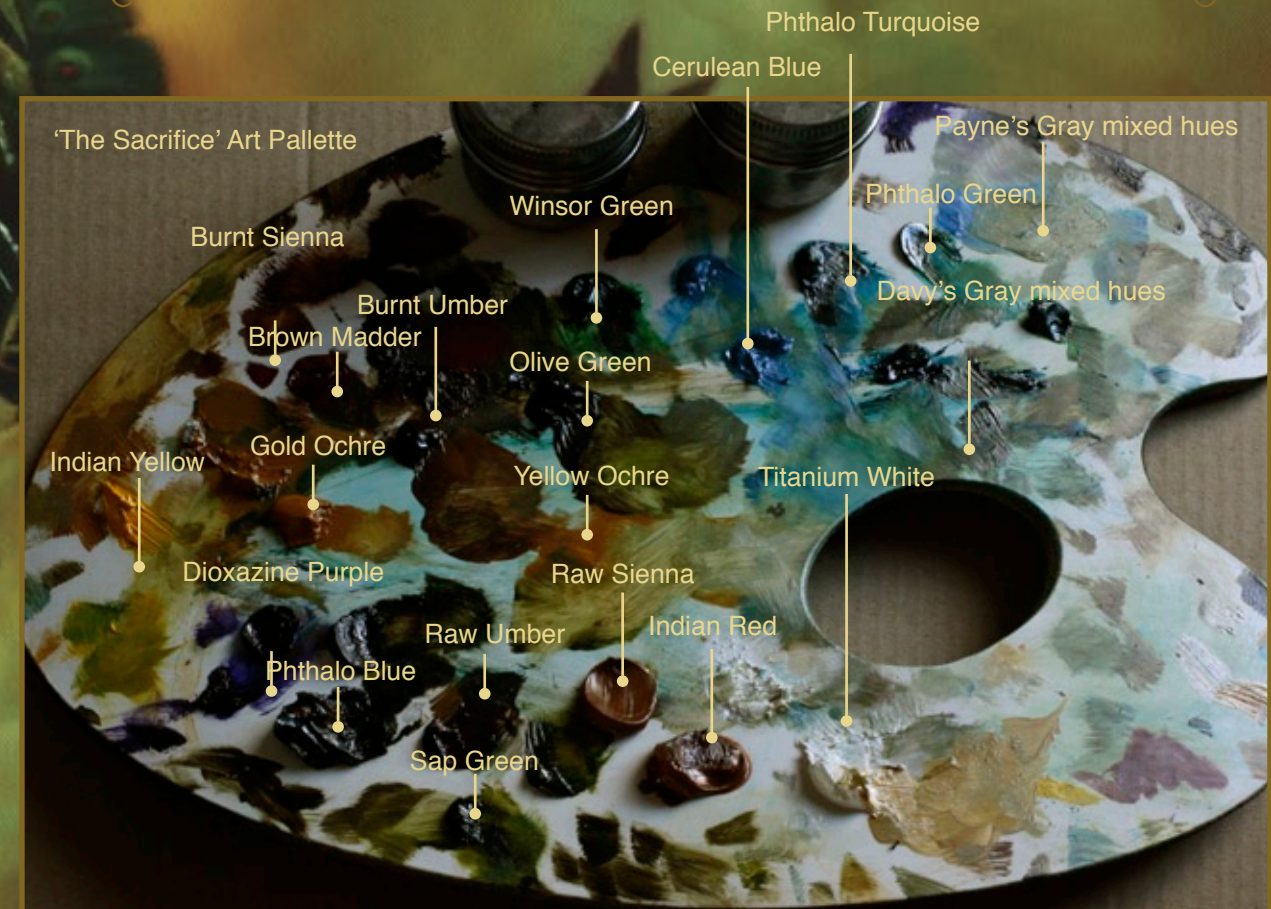
Why use muted colours rather than bright colours, after all bright colours draw the eye? Well, like everyone I have specific tastes and simply prefer a muted palette for my paintings. If you are at the first stage of becoming an artist you could take all the information in this book and just bump the colours up to find the beginnings of your own style.

There are other reasons I prefer a muted palette, one being longevity. I find it easier to return to a painting that isn't screaming with colour. A colourful painting will certainly gain from initial impact but unless it has been handled by a colour master such as Greg Hildebrandt, Julie Bell or Michael Whelan the chances are it will eventually become a literal eyesore. Another reason is atmosphere. Think of distant memories: a rainy afternoon, a misty mountain, or an exotic journey through a desert; these kind of memories are usually remembered in muted colours and vague detail. Something magical happens when certain details and colour are left to the imagination.

When most students visit an artist's studio they will undoubtedly have their eyes fixed on the mixing of colours and values, with good reason, as this is an important stage of the painting process. But it's a fruitless exercise for the most part as the colours will be different for each painting and will also change in such a subtle way during mixing that it will be impossible to commit to memory. A better way to work out a palette is to arrange your colours in a constant system regardless of the colours used.

When you mix secondary colours (combinations of red, yellow and blue hues) with white you get warm or cool grays (values). I will start a painting using dark dull colours, adding purer colour and lighter values until I reach the optimum colour saturation and lightest value for a particular painting. If I find a skin colour to be too cool, say blue, I'll add a little bit of a warmer colour such as sepia and visa versa.

The Rainbow Palette



For this palette I arranged my colours in a circle, rainbow fashion starting with a yellow hue going through the warm colours into cool colours right through to purple. I'll then place a blob of white outside the circle and use it to mix lighter values of each colour on the outside, leaving the inside of the circle to mix darker colours. So on the outside I'll have a dab of yellow mixed to various lights then next to it a dab of orange in various light shades. On the inside of the circle I mix various colours together without white to create darker shades of each colour. Keeping the darks and whites separate will keep colours pure. By the end it's a free for all as I mix increasingly subtle colours throughout. On this page is a photo of my embattled palette after painting 'The Sacrifice'.

The perfect balance of colour and value are the ingredients needed to create timeless art...



This was a big Oil on Canvas, 40" X 40" and my first major oils after a ten years hiatus. I first painted The Oracle back in 2005 using computer software Corel Painter for a YA (young adult) book on mermaids, but it went unpublished as the art director considered it too sexy when finished! He had approved a detailed sketch, but I guess he didn't foresee the realism or life breathed into the work via light and shadow. I got paid and that was that. I put the piece aside and carried on with my other book jacket commissions.

Then in 2008, the first ever IlluXCon event was announced in Altoona, U.S.A.. The brainchild of creators Pat and Jeannie Wilshire it featured just about every traditional fantasy artist that had ever inspired me, including my hero as a young aspiring artist, the mighty Boris Vallejo. Right then I decided I was going—whatever it took! The hand of fate was so firm I was hardly conscious of my own say in it. I emailed the organizer, Pat Wilshire, from my home in Australia and was told all tickets were sold out. I slumped dejected before boldly asking if I could attend as an artist. To my amazement he knew my work from Easton Press and said yes. From that moment my artist's road took one of it's most dramatic turns toward the illustrator's Holy Grail...fine art.



I had six months to fill a five metre square panel with new oil paintings and still complete my regular workload for clients. Using Corel Painter it would have been easy, but oils? I had to think boldly again and went out and bought three very large canvases big enough to fill the panel space and decided to revisit an old Corel Painter artwork I thought could have been done better. Since the color scheme and mood was already established in the digital art gave me the confidence to tackle the first oils.



I had the original sketch from three years earlier but was unhappy with the anatomy as my artist's eye had developed since then, so I called back my original model, the talented actress and theatre director, Tora Hylands, who has since left Australia to find roles in various SF & Fantasy productions such as the TV series Sanctuary and movies such as Twilight: Breaking Dawn. I recommend working with actors or life drawing models over standard models for hire as they take dramatic art direction with more understanding and passion. To find one who also appreciates SF & Fantasy is a godsend.

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Tora works in physical Theatre and is exceptionally good at inhabiting my creations and becoming, in this case, an imprisoned mermaid chained to a rock. She dreams death for her captor knowing it means her own end as he cannot return to unshackle her. To sacrifice life for principal is about as powerful a story as I can imagine and is almost unbearably touching, as in the story of Jesus, Spartacus or Joan of Arc.

A single source of light creates a dramatic range of shadow and form known since the days of Leonardo Da Vinci as Chiaroscuro. I always work from monochrome or black and white photography as I think value (tones from black to white) is the most important thing to focus on when working with anatomy.

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The first step after the refined sketch is to transfer it to canvas. This is done by drawing the image in reverse on paper or tracing paper, taping it to the canvas and burnishing the back of the drawing with a spoon. This can be difficult as canvas is springy and it's hard to burnish visible lines. My personal tip is to place a large hard backed book behind the canvas and burnish down in blocks the size of the book, moving each time you get close to the edge of the book.

Once that's done I thin some Raw Sienna to an almost transparent wash using odorless white spirit and lay down tone. I also decided the figure worked better in a mirrored pose from the first attempt due to the fact that we (in western culture at least) read from left to right and therefore would rest our eyes finally on the face, the main focus.

As regards medium, I will be using White Spirits to thin the paints on this artwork but will use a variety of mediums in the following artworks, comparing the pros and cons to help you decide which methods best suit you by culminating with a recap chapter at the end of the book.

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After a lunch break the thin wash has already set enough for me to work into. Some of the Sienna wash may mix with the Umber and Olive Green color I paint on top, but this is fine as it simply creates variants within the same family. One of the most freeing tips I ever heard came from the great Boris Vallejo who simply stated that sometimes you should let the painting do as it pleases. Automatically my work became fresher as a result of not trying to control it so much. This stage is known as the underpainting (it goes under the painting) and is usually in monotone. This kind of greenish underpainting is classically known as Verdaccio. Still using thin oils I add some white to build form.

You can see how big this artwork is by checking out the A4 reference of the original art at top left of my giant custom made drawing board. At this stage I'm amazed at how easy the act of painting is after a long absence from painting traditionally, especially at this size. Such is the power of the digital software Corel Painter that I never really gave up my painter's hand, I was simply practicing all those years in virtual oils in preparation for this moment.

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I'm blocking in the background here with big brushes, mostly flats and filberts, not caring too much for the edges of the figure which I'll refine later. I use a cloth dipped in oil to smear color around. I also use a rag dipped in solvent to pull color back which can create interesting textures as you crunch the rag in different combinations. A sponge can also be used but can leave debris behind if it's poor quality. I find the sponges sold in art shops a little too expensive and small. I've collected sea sponges washed up on the beaches of Tasmania that have worked well after a good soaking in tap water. Be creative and keep your eyes out for interesting materials to use in your art.

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Now the real work begins. Using opaque paints (thicker paints that cover, usually mixed with white) I get to work on blocking in the anatomy in dull tones. I work in sections that will leave me enough time to blend before the paint dries. I don't worry about very fine detail here as that is left until the end. The reason this is known as blocking in is that you are working out major forms in 'blocks'. Think of this stage as a sculpture would, chiseling away at marble, defining big shapes first before coming back to define further with smaller chisels later after the basic anatomy is formed. My paint at this stage is a little thicker and is now thinned using a medium of 70% white spirits with the addition of 30% linseed oil mixed in to make the paints flow.

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More sections blocked in and I'm getting a clearer idea of how the light will work against the background darks. At this point I'm also working back into the background to create a pool of light (pardon the pun).

I leave the background at a stage that is almost finished then touch it up again at the very end when the figure is complete to marry them together and unify the whole picture. To labour on the background at this stage would slow down my enthusiasm for the project may also result in a stiff looking artwork.

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Left to dry I come back to the painting the following day and add color on top using semi-opaque paints, thinned with a 50% linseed oil and 50% odorless white spirit. The oily mix adds color but still shows the previous day's painting underneath. As some of the paint is opaque which, means it covers, you could call this a scumbling technique (a way of rubbing down thin paint to harmonize colors), but with my paint very thin it's more like glazing which is usually done with transparent colors.

The main thing is not to hold back your artist's hand in order to get the technique perfect, just keep your eye on the artwork and the technique will get honed over time, for now it's your vision that counts most. I'm not saying throw technique out the window, just to keep it second to the vision. Once you learn the rules you can break them at will, but make sure you know them first. Brandywine artist Harvey Dunn (1884-1952) cited passion above technique: 'Paint more with feeling than with thought,' he told his students, 'when intellect comes in, art goes out.' It's true, the only thing that matters is the end result, but it must be noted, Harvey knew his technique well enough to forget it!

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As I paint I'm surrounded by reference from the artist who started my love of fantasy illustration, the great Boris Vallejo. It's important to study the work of great artists like Boris to not only be inspired but also to remind yourself of how high the benchmark can be if you have the talent and the will to work hard. I discovered Boris' art at thirteen years of age and it cemented my idea of becoming a professional fantasy illustrator (before this I was sold on the idea of becoming a Disney artist). In the same year I discovered the great Frank Frazetta and have been enthralled with their body of work ever since.

I was lucky in finding the benchmark so high so soon and knowing how hard I had to work to reach it. I never drew so much in my spare time as I did in my teenage years. No internet, no mobile phones, no distractions. They were great years of uninterrupted study. If you can turn these time thieves off, I recommend you do so while you're painting. They'll still be there waiting for you at the end of the day.

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Adding still more glazed and opaque paints on top the next day I take a soft brush and blend the colors together all the time wiping the brush with a dry rag to keep the hairs soft. Here is a studio shot of the art almost finished. Along with Boris reference you can also glimpse Frazetta's 'Dark Kingdom' hanging on the wall to keep me motivated (not the original of course). This size of the Boris art book will give you a further idea of the scale of this painting. It's worth noting also that my study of art is not confined to two artists, it's just Boris and Frank constantly rekindle that early wonder in me and keep me motivated.



Now using smaller sable brushes I get in close and concentrate on the scales and other refined detail. Even though I have photo-reference I will also refer to anatomical books and my own studies for more accurate anatomy. More accurate than a photo? Absolutely. As discussed in the life drawing chapter photos are for reference only and are often deceiving and obscure. I can always tell if an artist has relied on photo reference without having studied anatomy as it's usually horrible and lifeless work harbouring all the mistakes of the photo multiplied by the mistakes of the artist trying to recreate form he doesn't fully understand.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is a close up as I blend. Each day I come back to a dry painting and add more thinned colour which I blend as in the previous day, adding more lush colour as I go. I used to meticulously draw every fish scale on my working drawing but now I find it more natural to paint scales and blemishes directly by eye onto the painting as it's easier to follow the contours of the modeled flesh.



As always I spend the majority of time on the face and hands. As the great Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) said, 'People will forgive anything but the face and hands.' How right he was. I'll turn the painting upside down to get a fresh look at it, then stand back. It's surprising how many errors become apparent using this method. I'll also use a mirror to check further. If the face is wrong the painting will fail. Give this part of your painting all you've got!

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

IlluXCon Spreading Your Artistic Wings



The previous artwork 'The Oracle', created for IlluXCon brought an unexpected commission before the show even began. I had shown Pat Wilshire, the show's co-creator, progress shots of 'The Oracle' and he asked if I would be interested in painting the first official poster. This kind of luck was incredible, but luck can nearly always be traced back to you placing yourself in it's path. It's tough to be bold if you're shy but sometimes you need to be if you want to spread your artistic wings and fly. Ask yourself the old question, 'What's the worst that can happen?' It's not war, you *will* survive your bold move. The worst that can happen is a life of regret for not taking the leap of faith.

The first show opened at the Altoona Heritage Centre in November 2008 and featured most of the greatest Sci-Fi & Fantasy traditional artists of the last century, along side a generation of artists inspired by them, including myself.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



So, as well as miraculously shoe-horning my way into the first historic IlluXCon as a guest artist after the gates had closed, I now had the nerve wracking privilege of painting the first official poster. It had to be of outstanding quality as it was advertising the talents of the world's greatest Sci-Fi & Fantasy artists. Talk about pressure. Pat briefed me on an idea he had for a fallen cyborg angel, then left me to interpret the image. I produced three pencil sketches scanned and colored in Photoshop then emailed them as jpegs for him to choose one.



I would have been happy to paint any of the roughs but was glad to find Pat chose my favorite of the three. Keep in mind an art director will often choose your least favorite, so make sure all are strong. My favorite model, Tora, was out of town on an acting gig so I took a chance and hired bodybuilding champ, Sarah Sliwka to pose. Sarah was in great shape, and needed to be to play the part of a figure able to fly for hours on end (everything must ring true). Although I broke my rule of only working with actors she did a great job. I photographed her from my veranda to get this overhead shot.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



Here is the sketch on the reverse of tracing paper ready to burnish onto canvas. I wanted to work on canvas for the prestige factor but learned during this painting never to work on canvas smaller than 36" long if you want to do detailed work due to the lumpy weave. This proved to be a hard learned lesson that I overcame with lots of patience and have since gone back to gessoed illustration board for my smaller paintings.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



Here is the color rough stage. I hinted at a more metal form but Pat was concerned she looked like she was wearing futuristic leggings. He was right. It's always worth asking someone with a fresh eye to look at the rough stages before committing to canvas.

Pat has an artist's eye, but even a non-artist may spot something you didn't see. With the color rough taped to my drawing board for reference I get to work on the underpainting. As usual I pick out some large flat and filbert brushes to get started as their bulk forces me to work out the mass instead of getting bogged down in detail too soon. Make sure you keep the brushes clean and the room free of dust or your work will attract hair and dirt leaving your art looking like it fell on the floor.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I start by getting the anatomy correct. I will consult anatomy books and good anatomy models at this stage as it's vital to get right early otherwise you it will haunt you forever. I correct the photo reference lens distortion and burnt out detail as I work. I will enhance what I feel is needed as real life needs a push to make it magical. If you look at video footage of behind the scenes of making a movie, then view the actual movie shot on film with mood lighting and atmosphere in place you will understand what I mean.



Here I paint in some opaque color to establish depth. I'm concerned with making this painting glow and am planning ahead to darken the outer edges to draw the eye toward the face which will be filled with, I hope, heart breaking emotion. One thing I strive for in my art is passion. I never want my characters to look like they are aware of the viewer or to seem blank-headed. They most appear to be totally involved in whatever world or situation I have placed them in. I approach painting like a method actor approaches a role. Let's call it method painting.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I had reference of a bird to study the feathers. It's important to build a reference file, especially at the start of your career. But I find as I get more experienced I use less and less reference and now use none for the likes of rocks or skies. I can't imagine going without figure reference though for this style of realistic oil painting as just the very turn of one muscle affects another then another. Add changing light to the mix and you will be learning about human anatomy for the rest of your life.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is the entire work in progress. I paint the clockwork wings and the crown at the same time to keep the design consistent. The whole thing is in flux and being constantly reshaped to fit my vision. All the time I'm working on the face, which on this piece I ended up repainting completely—twice! That's how important the face is. If the face is wrong the whole painting will fail.

Getting a nice sense of depth here now with the values in place. Once the values are working the whole painting is heading in the right direction on the road to success.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



In this close up I'm still plotting out form and light. Painting the clockwork wings was both tricky and great fun. As there was no reference used it meant I could just get lost in the workings of it. I use the light from the model to gauge where to place the highlights on the iron parts. With everything in place I move on with confidence to the color glazing and final blending stage.



The most reflective materials are metals and you can see I've added oranges to the underside for backlight (maybe from a fire somewhere off the side) and blues/ greens to the upper curves to reflect sky. This is a classic light combo that I used a zillion times in my advertising days. I often consider my years as an advertising illustrator to be time wasted on disposable art, but it taught me a lot in terms of work ethic, deadlines, shortcuts, etc and certainly kept my drawing and painting skills well honed to return to the genre I loved when the opportunity arrived again.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Onto the serious work of glazing and blending. Glazing is as simple as adding a glaze medium to your paints to thin them to a transparency. For my glazing I simply use linseed oil but there are many glazing mediums available at art stores. At this stage I'll add extra bits were the mood takes me. Also be careful not to highlight everything, lest your painting looks like it's been snowed on. At the risk of sounding obvious, only highlight the highest light! See how the long ornate handle sings out in contrast to the shadowed cogs.



I really enjoyed adding all the subtle colors to the wings. It's a big mistake to assume everything has the same color hue all the way through, i.e. various shades of the color of brown. Everything reflects the environment to different degrees so there are subtle blues and greens worked into the browns as well as some warm colors speckled into the cool blues.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



A close up of the scales, which I paint on top after the legs are dry. It's not important to paint every scale all the way around the leg, an impression will do the job better than a fussy mess of detail and will also be not so tiring on the eye.



I add a tear for extra drama and work on the face until it's right. Although flesh is not as reflective as metal it still contains oil and is more reflective than you would think, especially if you are next to water or metal, hence the glow on the side of the face here. Hold some gold next to your skin and study hard. Study is the key to success! I consider this a charmed painting as not only did it introduce me to my peers with as first official poster art for IlluXCon it also garnered me my first Chesley Award nomination.

Death of Diana The Art of Self Promotion



I painted this one for myself as part of my ongoing Lost World series for a proposed book of my own making (it's good to always have a project on the go to keep the creative juices flowing). The Lost World artworks are all connected to a story set in an undiscovered continent on a re-imagined Earth. Once the painting was started I auctioned it online and it was snapped up by an astute U.S. collector at the color rough stage. This Painting was done on gessoed illustration board as using canvas at this 19"X25" size would have been too coarse to paint fine detail onto, as I discovered on the previous painting. The collector made a good decision with his bid as the final painting was also nominated for a Chesley award when completed.

When there is no commission to be had, then self promotion is the only route left and can lead to more worthy work than the commission you were simply hoping might drop in your lap. A harsher mantra to shock a jobbing artist into affirmative action would be to whisper 'No one is aware of you'. I've endured severe periods in the artists' wilderness and sympathize with the lean times all artists suffer. This, I'm afraid, is the average artist's lot. Just know you are not alone and things will improve as your work improves. Those retirees reading this after a lifetime of work, can of course, relax and enjoy painting for the sheer pleasure.



Here's the color rough painted in Corel Painter using digital palette knives and oil pastels. You can of course use real palette knives and oil pastels but digital is much faster. I like to have a backstory to motivate me and add depth to an original painting. Here it is: Mermaid sisters take refuge in a cave after one is harpooned. Diana releases the deadly harpoon in her open hand as her sister, Andromeda, holds her in her arms. Revenge, of course, will ensue later in the story.



I call upon Holly Underwood and Carly Rees, two actresses from the Zen Zen Zo theatre company to pose. I pose and adjust their arms to match the rough, but the real drama comes from them understanding the back story and my detailed art direction. Some artists might roll their eyes at the idea of a back story but just check out their passionate expressions when these actresses hit the mark. They would be look phoney if they didn't know what their motivation was. I see lots of 'phoney' fantasy art where supposed heros of myth look like they are waiting for a bus.

Finding the right models to match your vision is a task worth taking. For instance, even some of the great Alma Tadema's (1836-1912) work I thought was severely lessened by his choice of non-actor friends posing as Roman nobility.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Two coats of Gesso on illustration board and then I transfer the drawing when it's dry, which is around fifteen minutes later, or half hour in a cold climate. I made a reverse drawing with a 2B pencil on tracing paper then burnished the penciled charcoal down. You can use anything round edged that won't score the board. I used a large torch-cell battery to burnish this art! I've taped the board to a flat surface (my drawing board) to stop it warping when saturated with paint. Warping is not a problem on stretched canvas as it has no room left to warp due to the stretching process, but thin board will buckle if it's not braced.

The board may still look warped but this is due to the camera lens. I could have corrected this in Photoshop but left it as a visual warning to all on how the camera distorts, which is why I keep harping on about correcting your drawings when working from reference photos. Using a 50mm lens will go some way to helping keep figure proportions true when photographing models, but you will still need to consult your anatomy reference books before committing to paint.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



On this painting I block in using raw sienna. I used acrylic paints here for the underpainting stage. If using White Spirits gives you a headache then you may want to use an acrylic underpainting for every oil painting you do as it's at the underpainting stage at which the most use of spirits is applied.

Note that you can put acrylic paint under oils but not the other way round as oil repels water. I've taken out a few elements to improve the flow of the composition. Smaller details such as scales and harpoon line will be added at the detail stage. If put in all the detail now it would only get painted over during my 'big brushes' stage. No point in painting details twice.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here's the start of the block-in stage. At this point I'm moving across the image without slowing for fine detail, simply blocking in the lights and darks in basic monochrome colors to establish mood and form in the chiaroscuro style of the old masters. This will keep the overall art organic and flowing. The next stage will include the figures, painted in the same manner, still leaving fine detail, subtle blending, highlights and color to be applied at the end to the whole image.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here I'm blocking in the first figure and re-shaping the background. Still avoiding the urge to detail and blend until everything is blocked and balanced. Note the pool of light starting to form. I always work from background to foreground so as not to fuss too much on the edges.

The bluish glare at the edges is from overhead lights. When working at night or on overcast days I use two lights, the overhead light on the ceiling is fitted with a daylight bulb (blue cast) and my swivel light is fitted with an ordinary light bulb (warm light). The danger in using just one light source when painting is that it will affect how you see color. If you work with only warm light you will tend to mix more cool colors to compensate. The next day your art may have a bluer cast than you perceived during the night. By using both warm and cool light combined will keep your colors true.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



That's the journeyman stages gone. There are still lots of problems left to resolve but most issues have now been tackled, and the hardest areas (midtones) have been addressed. The midtone is the middle tone between dark and light and is the area that contains the purest colour as it is the area least drained of colour by either shadow or light.

The next stage is turning this work into a piece of art with lighting, glazed color, detail, blending, etc. The scruffy outer edges you see on the artwork is masking tape which I'll peel off at the end to give a crisp white border. If this was a canvas painting I would simply paint right to the edge as canvas can traditionally be hung with or without a frame.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is the blending stage in progress. Along the top figure's arm you can see a dark outer line. This is due to me spreading a fine layer of oil medium over the dry figure before painting on top (the same 50/50% linseed oil/odorless spirit medium I use to thin the oil paints at the blending stage).

By laying down this thin floating layer of oil I will be able to paint more smoothly on top with paint giving me a fluid surface to blend into and also taking the drag and wear off my brushes. I believed I had invented this technique when I first started oil painting, but discovered later it had been thought of long before my Eureka moment. The technique is known as 'oiling out', and is mostly forgotten in art school teaching where it is now more traditionally used to restore sunken colors to a painting before the final varnish.

This is day ten on the painting. Not a long time in classic oil painting terms, all the same I'm running a bit slow on this one and I know Boris and Frank would see this as an ice age. Still, the next two working days should show more dramatic results as my paintings usually speed up as I go along and grow in confidence.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



The most important part of the painting in close up. Getting the expression of angst is very difficult and I need to use restraint here as there is the danger of it looking like amateur theatrics. The model has used just the right amount of expression, but painting expression takes a lot of skill to get right, even with the aid of a reference model. Can't rush this stage. This close up is blown up from the original face length of around two inches.

When I first studied original artworks up close I was under the impression that I needed to work with thicker paint, but the confusion came from the fact that I was looking at the final build up of thin layers along with some final impasto flourishes. I was basically looking at the final strokes and believing that thicker paint was used all the way through the painting stages. You can see how thin my paint is in this extreme close up. If your paint is too thick you will have trouble painting detailed figures and will struggle with blending. The best way to understand the consistency of the paint I use in my blending stages is to think of the consistency of 'melted butter' This is achieved by adding oil mixed with thinners such as turpentine or white spirit as described throughout this book.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Coming to the finish line with the details, namely the fish scales. You can see the oiling out more clearly here which is particularly helpful when painting small details as it's hard to paint fine lines on a dry surface. It's also tough on brushes working into a dry ground, so oiling out is recommended if only for economic reasons. Brushes can be very expensive, especially sable brushes.

Best to use bristle brushes for the scrubbing and blocking and the sables for blending and detail. Never use the cheap brushes you see in bargain stores as they will shed hairs all over your work and you will spend ages picking them out, or worse discovering them dried into your art later. Cheap brushes are a false economy and not even worth mixing your paint with.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Day twelve: almost finished, but knowing me I'll probably spend another four painting days on this before I'm satisfied. Still blending, adding some color as I go, leaving the finest detail and brightest colors until the end. This is the time to get out some reference if you're new to painting metal. Good reference sources are cheaply found in the free catalogues at the front of jewelry stores. Books on Hollywood epics are good too; films such as Cleopatra will have reference of ornate jewelry reacting to flesh. Big budget history movies are also an inspiration due to the high standards of production design.

Patrick J Jones

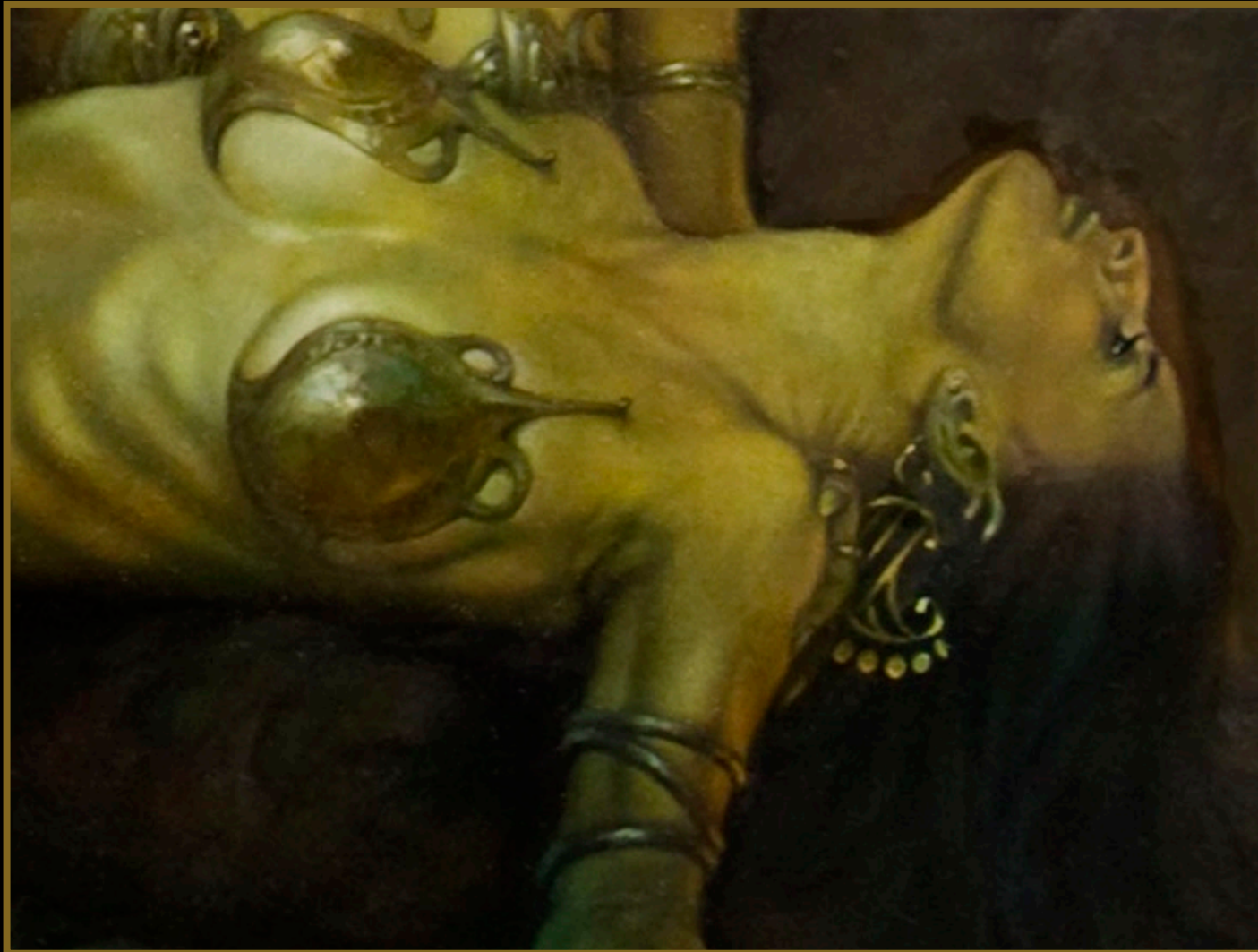
◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Day thirteen: I originally guessed this date for complete finish but still some detail and color to go in over the whole image. The dark patches of drying linseed oil will not appear on the final art. Artwork shows some glare to the right due to the touch-dry oil. Oils have a reputation for slow drying times, which is true, but working thin like this means each layer is dry enough to work on top of the next day. The slow drying may put some people off but it's the number one reason I love oil paints. Only with oils can you truly move paint around and blend colours into one another over an extended period of time.

I've taken a lot of time to get this painting how I want it, because paintings are like novels and can be tweaked forever, but at the end of the day you have to move on. As Leonardo da Vinci (1452 –1519) famously said, "Art is never finished, only abandoned." Still, I'm going to squeeze more juice out of this one. Almost done.



Close up of the penultimate art stage in progress. Just starting to blend in the final colors onto my freshly laid oily ground. It's amazing how you can come back to a painting after a long, hard fought battle the previous day only to be totally refreshed and energized, ready to go again. This I put down to the fact that the final art is not only a mystery to an observer, but also to myself. I really want to see how well this can turn out. Also the art gets easier as you go along as by this point you know the ground so well and are pretty much fearless. That's why it's important to paint often. Leaving big gaps of time between paintings can lead to rust and the fear of failure.

Once again you can see the clear linseed oil drying just outside the figure edges due to my oiling out technique. Nothing to worry about as you can see in the final stage completed opposite.



Spot the difference between this color blending stage and the mid-blend stage on the facing page. Blending is done with soft, dry sable brushes on wet paint by 'blending' the edges of the colors together. This needs a delicate touch and very clean brushes. If you study these two stages carefully you will see lots of subtle colors, such as cerulean blue, yellow ochre and olive greens along with the obvious 'flesh colors'.

Realistic flesh needs lots of shifts in color hue to be convincing. Note the warmer colors at the top of the chest, providing a hot island of color between the cool underside of the neck and the breasts. These areas read as realistic flesh because they usually receive less sunlight than the top of the chest and shoulders.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Day fourteen: the final painting day. I spend the entire day glazing over the painting with translucent color using a linseed oil rich glaze. I used to work this in with Alkyd glaze medium but now use linseed oil and spirit mix as it dries slower and is less sticky (which also saves on the wear of brushes).



I really enjoyed painting these sea ravaged rocks worn down by salt and wind. You've got to imagine how the environment works to make the painting not only atmospheric but convincing. Embrace method painting, immerse yourself into each artwork, and you and the painting will be all the richer for it.

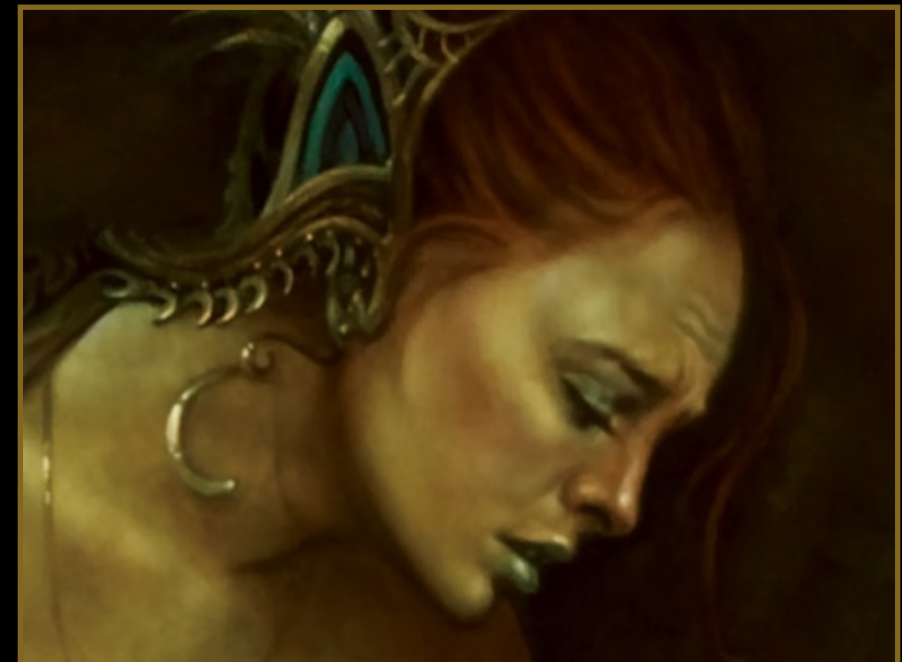
Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Once again lots of time dedicated to the subtle coloring of the face and the many colors reflected there. Study faces, especially pale faces and note the nose is pinker than the cheek, and under the eyes where the flesh is thin the colour is more bluish. Also the ears are pinker, though not in this fantasy figure.



The final touches. Compare this stage to the earlier close up to see the increased depth possible with layered colour. Now we're finished and ready for a coat of varnish when the painting is completely dry (as opposed to touch-dry). A coat of varnish will replenish the dark colors that tend to 'sink' on drying, especially in spots applied with mostly spirit diluted colour. I use a mix of 80% matt varnish and 20% gloss varnish (Winsor & Newton) to get a nice satin finish that is neither too dull or too glossy. If you really want to go the whole traditional route you could oil out the entire surface first before drying and then go to the varnishing stage later.

Palace of Medusa *Creating Stories*



Palace of Medusa is another piece in my Lost World series. In my version of re -imagined myth a young Medusa (her gaze turned men to stone) is held captive in the king's palace and guarded by blind slaves, where she waits to be unleashed on enemies who would invade the city. No doubt of course this will backfire on the king and his kingdom. As I've said, creating stories for your paintings is a great way to get more passion into your art. It's important here to make sure Medusa has the right amount of both allure and sinister intent.

Palace of Medusa made the Chesley Award shortlist and was subsequently bought by a private collector in the U.K. Knowing art painted with passion is always sellable gives me incentive to paint everyday even though the work may not be commissioned to begin with.

As a footnote: The Chesley Awards are presented to the best SF & Fantasy artists in the world each year as voted for by the members of the ASFA: <http://www.asfa-art.org/>



I started with a colour rough painted in Corel Painter and printed out for reference. This is where I work out all the hardest problems, which to me are, value (light to dark tones) and an atmospheric colour scheme. This is a stage that a lot of amateurs skip, then end up abandoning the painting because they lose direction. Preliminary sketches and colour roughs can save a lot of frustration later on, they are not just worth doing, but I think essential if you mean to produce something special.



In an unusual step I turned to an old photo session for my reference of two models, Tora and Michael, and repositioned them in the painting to play separately. I was originally sure I was going to paint them as they are here then realized later how close the pose was to an old Frank Frazetta painting of Conan. The master's influence is so overwhelming that sometimes I forget myself. Once again I use black and white photography for my reference shots so as not to be influenced by colour, but more importantly to concentrate on value. I can't emphasize enough how important a full range of value is in a painting. Unless you want your paintings to look like foggy scenes you must learn to see contrast in values.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Somewhere along the line I lost the original sketch for this but it can be clearly seen here in the underpainting. I wanted to paint a full fleshed Medusa here instead of the usual stick-thin model. This doesn't mean she won't be attractive, in fact she may be more so because of the reality of such a woman, that is apart from those deadly eyes.

You'll notice at this stage Medusa is a little more heavy around the hips than the final art will show. The face will also go through a lot of change. I thought the face was a little small and enlarged it later. It's best to get this stuff right at the sketch stage, but if you see it at the painting stage you only have two choices, either start again or change it on the fly. I feel confident in my skills to carry on, but this is only due to my previous tip of painting constantly and leaving not too much time between paintings, thus losing the fear of the painting process.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here's the first block-in with big brushes. The oils are thinned down with white spirit and dry quickly but I can still drag them around and do so here with a cloth wrapped around my finger to manipulate the marble textures on the columns. I also use a dabbing motion with the cloth to create the mist. Marble is particularly easy to do using the rag and wipe method, much easier than trying to paint it with brushes.

By wiping the wet paint I can create more random marbling that if I meticulously tried to render it with brush strokes. Once I see the marble emerge I can then add detail with brushes. As usual I work from background to foreground not worrying too much about the edges overlapping the figures. Try it the other way and experience a whole world of pain.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I take a huge brush loaded with a sepia/umber mix and wash over the entire painting to get harmonious tone before blocking in the figures. You can see how much more refined Medusa's face is now compared to the previous stages. It's good practice to constantly review your paintings to see what can be improved rather than simply painting by numbers based on your original sketch. The danger of sticking religiously to the sketch can lead to boredom and stiff looking artwork. After every break I turn the painting upside down or sideways so that when I come back into the room I immediately see new ways to improve the art due to my fresh perspective. The face of Medusa is now more sultry due to what I saw on returning from a break, which was a face much too innocent.

Keeping the story true is also important and you must keep asking questions about the characters, such as what kind of flesh will Medusa have. No doubt she will be very pale as she is a constant prisoner in the tower therefore I treat her flesh with lots of cool colors. It's worth getting to know your characters to make them believable otherwise your work may be overlooked as lifeless and superficial.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here I'm working hard on getting the values strong enough to create a light source centering on Medusa. I've also placed a sheen on the pillars to indicate their roundness and solidity. All the time I'm reworking the face to capture a sinister but inviting expression. You may cry out that I'm breaking the rules here by working on the foreground figure before painting the background figure, but they are far enough apart that one does not overlap the other. As stated previously, you must know the rules well before you can break them. Working without rules will sometimes yield interesting results, but art painted without basic foundation training in solid technique will more often end in disaster, especially academic styled painting such as this.

An interesting note on this artwork is that it has become attributed to Frank Frazetta due to it's elements: a girl by a pillar, an archway, and a slave. I freely admit the influence of Frank's Egyptian Queen here as it's one of my favorites. I think the misunderstanding began with an article in ImagineFX's tribute magazine to Frank when he died, citing this as his version of the Medusa myth. I had written a few words on Frank for the same magazine, which must have started the confusion. Then somewhere along the line someone on the internet produced bootlegged prints by super-imposing Frank's signature onto the prints! Talk about the blind leading the blind. The spell of Medusa I guess.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I'm adding more opaque colours to Medusa and the mist to bring her forward. The expression is getting closer in menace and I can leave it for a while and concentrate on the rest of the painting safe in the knowledge that all is well and on course. I work on the background figure with a 'thick milk' paint consistency and blend with soft brushes. Remember when blending to wipe the brush you're blending with on a rag to stop it becoming a reloaded paint brush as you will be thinning out the paint as you blend, thus picking some pigment up into the hairs. If you don't wipe the brush you'll end up laying paint down again. I also get a rag out again to rub some paint around onto the pillars.

I work more on Medusa with slightly thicker oils thinned with 70% spirit to 30% oil. When I say thicker I mean the thickness of face cream. Now I can leave the art to dry until tomorrow. Time wise I spent two days on this stage and this is usually the stage where most time is spent. Painting is like writing a novel, the first words come blazing out in the opening scene then the middle is all character development and staging before the grand finale picks up the pace again.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Medusa is almost finished at this stage. The painting is dry to the touch and I can spread a film of 50/50% oil/white spirit mix with a large brush (oiling out) over the entire surface of the art board. I then start to paint onto the glossy surface. The addition of a shadow across her face adds a nice mystery to her lurking nature. You can see the benefit of glazing here on the smoothness of the pillar and the smoothness of the face.

This stage moves faster than the previous stage even though it yields finer results, this is due to the fact that all the figurative problems are already solved and I'm working more on creating harmony than reworking anatomy. I've balanced everything with darker colors around Medusa and therefore made the light more intense on her figure. Compare this in atmosphere to the stage before to understand the importance of getting the journeyman work correct, and the power of glazing to produce lush color and rich darks.



Here's a close up of the blending stage before I leave it to dry for the tomorrow's final glazing session. With paint this thin an overnight period is time enough as long as I don't go too heavy with the brushes the next day. Try to finish a major stage if you can each day so you can return with a fresh eye and a fresh challenge. I'm planning to work in sections tomorrow as there is a lot of detail to add and I'll be working slower. So instead of coating the entire art I'll work on sections I can finish in a session, such as this portion of the art before moving onto another portion. It's good to have a plan worked out for each day so you are constantly motivated toward the end goal rather than entering the studio and simply scratching your head. If you have a game plan it can stop any thought of giving up or losing interest.

I use my usual trick of turning the art on its head and could see that the addition of some gold coins on Medusa's toga would not only help give a graceful arc to her thigh but also add detail to a large area. I've always liked art that had detail concentrated in small spaces surround by less detailed mass. Adding details in these areas is a good way to direct the viewer's eye around the painting. If you look at the next stage you can see I've created stepping stones for the eye to travel from the gold on the hip up the curve of the body, resting for a moment on the bejeweled arm before resting on the face. This method is a good tool to use in creating interesting composition.



It's all about subtlety and detail at this final glazing stage. Here I'm working on the figure and have coated the area on and around Medusa with glaze medium, this time the mix is 50% linseed oil and 50% turpentine and onto this glossy surface I paint transparent colors on top with touches of opaque colors in the highlight areas. Then with a soft brush I blend the colors together.

The reason for the shift from using white spirit as a thinner to using turpentine is two-fold: firstly turpentine is a superior flowing, yet more toxic, blending medium, but if I was to use it in a large application such as I did with the white spirits the previous day I'd be risking my health. As I'm working on smaller areas there are less fumes and I paint with no ill effects. The second reason is that turpentine is less likely to pick up previous layers of paint. Turpentine and oil mixed together create that 'buttery' quality that oil painting is so famous for. In my glazing stage the consistency is that of 'melted butter'. When using turpentine it's essential to work in a room with good ventilation.

This is a big day of work but is no stress as I'm so involved with the project that I sometimes don't even know when I'm hungry. In this state you can accomplish much more than an artist who sees his work as merely a means to making money.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I've already added some dull opaque colors to the flesh so the underpainting of the slave is more dense than usual. I did this as the skin will be ethnic and very dark. Also we need to balance the picture and keep this character from visually competing with Medusa. You can see here that I have changed the ethnicity of the original model by studying reference from African tribesmen. This kind of reference search is easy to do on the internet but I tend to compile folders of photographs and magazine cut outs named and filed, i.e.: landscapes, animals etc...

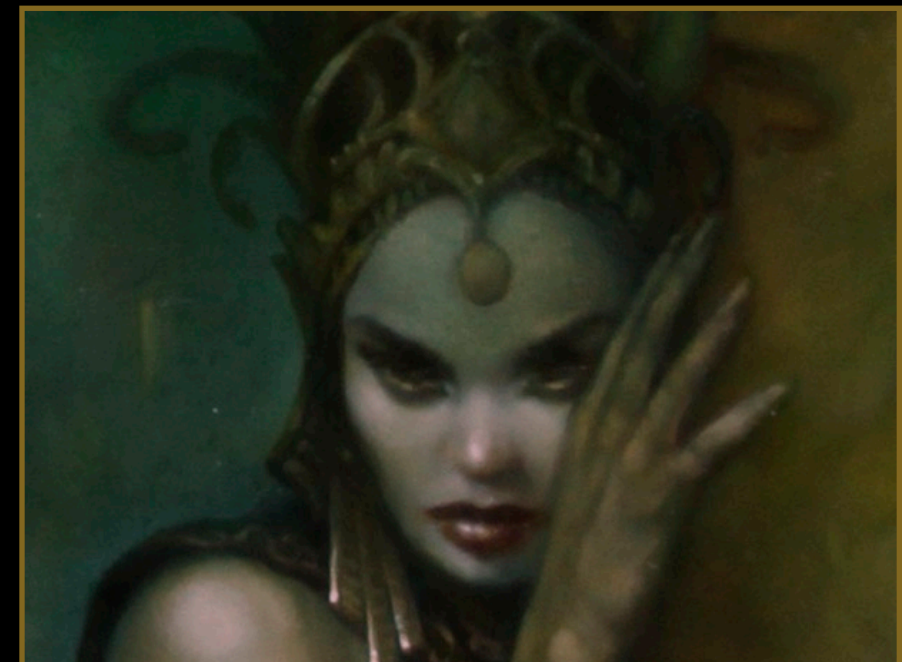


As I had a sepia underpainting I can add lots of complementary colors on top. Complementary colours are 'opposite' colours on the colour wheel and when placed close to each other give the artwork a living vibrancy. Don't fall into the trap of ignoring the fact that black flesh contains warm and cool colors in the same areas as white flesh. I add a tooth necklace and some scars to give him a history. Like I said before, get to know your characters and the art will gain more depth.

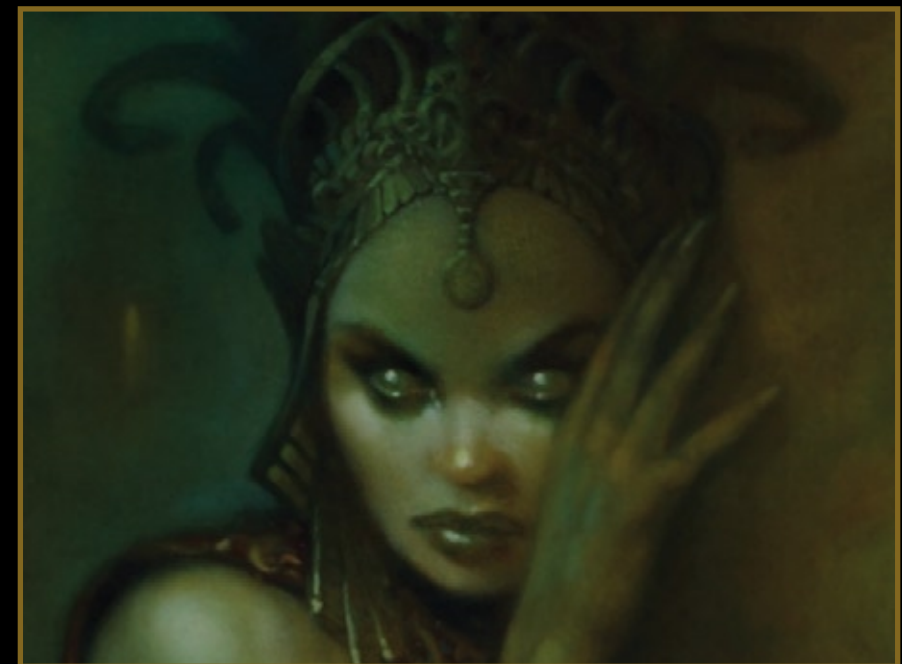
Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



It's worth studying these two close ups to appreciate how delicately the face should be treated. This is the area the painting will succeed or fail on. Originally I toyed with the idea of the eyes being empty voids but it wasn't dramatic enough. Sometimes the written word can be more dramatic than the realization of those words. I decide that the eyes should be glazed and colorless orbs. You can see below the dramatic difference this last minute decision has made to the final art. Art should always be open to any change beyond the sketch if it improves the final painting.



Lots of sable brushwork was used on the headdress and eyes here, and lots of blending with a soft dry brush. It's important to keep brushes clean as oil paint attracts hair and dust like a magnet. Sometimes when the painting is almost dry I'll pick out stuck hairs with a piece of masking tape. You need to judge this right to avoid picking up the paint but if you paint every day this kind of 'devil may care' attitude will not seem as crazy as it sounds as anything is easily fixed again with a swish of a brush.

The Lost World *Experiments with Paint*



This is the title painting for my 'The Lost World' series of paintings. Even though I had painted it for IlluXCon I still plan alternative reproduction usage. Remember you should always retain the copyright of any painting you sell and write it on any invoice to be fair and clear to the buyer.

Each painting in the series will connect an exotic story of betrayal, lust, revenge, treasure, mermaids and prehistoric creatures that all live in a world lost to time only to be discovered by a band of cut throat pirates. As stated before having a story in mind as you paint will absorb you more and possibly lead to other ideas for paintings. I wanted to show here the anticipation of some great upheaval to a way of life that will be changed forever by the coming of invaders.



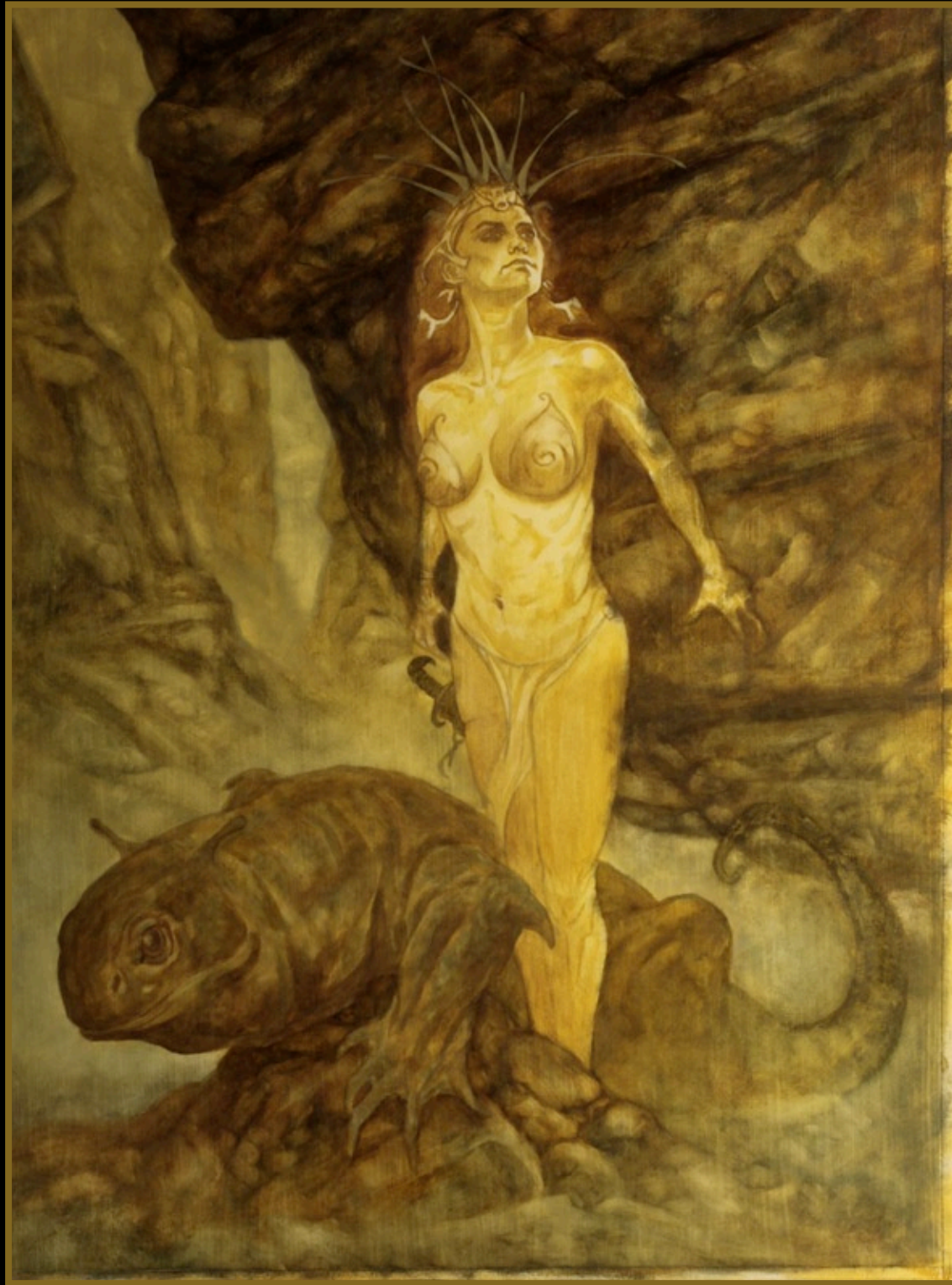
On this piece I have chosen to work in Windsor & Newton's water mixable oils for easy cleaning and a less hazardous work environment. Painting is dangerous? Can be if you breath the chemical fumes such as I mentioned with the turpentine before, especially in a poorly ventilated room. I'll also touch on other hazards during this painting. This was my first major experiment with water-mixable paints.

The paints feel a little too 'dry' so I will be adding water soluble linseed oil as I go to help the paints flow from the brush. Here is the underpainting in thin Sepia oils. At this stage I see no difference between traditional oils and the new variant. Once the water has evaporated they are returned to their oil state. Strange but true and I am very impressed.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Thin oils dry quickly and are ready for a second coat the next day. Here I'm laying in dull versions of the final colours and dragging back to the undercoat with rags and dry brushes to get texture on the rocks. It looks here like I've wiped away the previous day's work but this is just a mix of lighting from the morning sun in my studio and the contrast of the second coat. The streaky lines you see are from the coat of gesso underneath. Gesso is used to seal the surface so that the oil paint won't be sucked into the porous board. Working on unprimed board is not recommended for figure work as the oil is sucked away before you can properly blend.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Another coat of thin, dry paint is used to 'scrub in' the anatomy with bristle brushes. This is an unorthodox use of scumbling, which works faster than blending. Scumbling is usually used with a rag to scruff in lighter tones over a dark area such as highlights on water. I go back with a dry sable brush and blend to soften the muscle rendering.

At this point I am no longer thinking about the new medium as it is behaving and drying as oil. Amazing! If the product wasn't Winsor and Newton I may not have tried it out, but with their sterling reputation I guessed it would be something special, and it is.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I lay down a thin coat of water soluble linseed oil further thinned with water and refine the painting before blending with a soft brush. I'm getting the lighting right here and want to play with shadows to help with the ominous atmosphere. The mix feels stickier than regular oils and I am starting to notice the limitations of this strange new medium, especially in the blending. On the plus side it's clean and the brushes rinse out easily in water.



Working on the lizard here and grounding it with shadow. I don't want to draw attention away from the woman so I add mist to keep the detail vague and also add atmosphere. The water soluble oils are working fine on the lizard but I feel the paints 'tug' on my brush as they dry and I wonder if they'll be up to the task of blending flesh.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



This is a big day, all the problems of light and dark are solved and the low key color scheme is in place. Now I start to blend in subtle color. I need to pay attention to the difference in skin tone and texture of each character as it's contrasts that keep the viewer's eye lingering, contrasts in color, texture and value. The model is once again Carly Rees from Zen Zen Zo and she has pushed her anatomy to the point of anticipation personified.



Darks are added behind the figure to bring it into the light, and the background is knocked back to create distance. For the darks I mix phthalo blue and burnt umber. A mix of blues with other dark colors will give richer darks than pure black, which tends to sink and look dull. The woman's flesh is now reading as soft against the rocks and in comparison to the reptile. As I feared the woman's flesh was a tougher task to blend than if I'd used traditional oils, which makes me re-think the use of water soluble oils. I'll keep going and see if I can alter them somehow.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



More color and highlights. I'm also blending the figure more to make the flesh softer. The metal breastplates are a good contrast against the skin. A word of caution about some colours is worth noting here: some Cadmium Yellow is used at this stage. Cadmium is a toxic chemical and should never be sprayed, eaten, or rubbed with bare skin. Some old masters would use their thumbs to blend paint, which is a great method, but no doubt many died from poisoning as human skin can absorb poison into the bloodstream. My cadmium tubes now read non-toxic so I guess they are no longer 'true' cadmium. Some artists use surgical gloves when painting. Although I don't wear gloves I remain aware and keep my hands off the paint, washing them after every session.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Have added the gold thread in the quartz rock. This adds an exotic element and a new story feature, something for the pirates to come find and kill for, it also leads the eye to the figure. I've lightened the shadow on the beast and darkened the torso of the woman to lend weight to the breasts. I start adding 'odorless' white spirit to the water soluble linseed oil instead of extra water to help eliminate the sticky paint feeling as I go and it helps do the trick somewhat. At this stage I start to really notice the difference between traditional oils and water based oils in that the water based tend to dry more slowly, which was the oddest thing, then ends up a bit sticky. Still the fresh air and lack of headaches associated with pure thinning solvents are a massive plus, as is the cleaning up with water.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I'm detailing with smaller brushes at this stage. I keep the small brushes until the end so as not to fuss with the painting too early, that way I can treat the artwork as a whole instead of 'bits'. I also decided the breast plates need a more feminine touch and so add a little flourish in the design. I decide not to mix any more water with the water soluble linseed oil and continue mixing only odourless white spirit to complete the picture. With the ratio of spirit being below the total mix of 50% I can still clean my brushes in ordinary soap and water.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I had great fun painting the dragon, getting lost in its scales and veins, the shiny skin etc. At this point I'm using a lot of scumbling, laying down very dry oil and scrubbing it in with a dry brush or cloth, odd since we are getting a shiny effect. Just proves it's the eye and not necessarily the techniques that get us where we need to go. This also gives me the chance to work with one of my favourite colours, olive green. This is also a time when the much maligned color black can be mixed with yellows and sepias to get a wide range of dirty, realistic, greens.



I scumbled some dark umbers under the rib cage as I was starting to see the figure flatten. As the brushwork was very subtle I used a cloth wrapped around my finger to rub the paint on. It's very important that the paint underneath has had at least a day to dry, and even then you need to be light handed. I then leave the paint to take for a while then come back with a soft fan brush to soften further. These water based oils have proved a new and interesting challenge, although in blending they were a little frustrating. In future I'm guessing I'll use them in the early painting stages due to their harmless qualities. Once the water evaporates completely the painting is pure oils again and so continue to dry by oxidation.

Artemis and the Satyr *Art as a Lifestyle*



Another painting in The Lost World series completed with IlluXCon in mind. In this painting, as with Palace of Medusa I have also drawn loosely from Greek myth. Here Artemis has wounded the Satyr with arrows to slow down his flight before capturing him atop a rocky pinnacle. Once again I have a complete story outside my painting to help immerse me into the art. This was a large canvas at 36"X48". Another note regarding painting without commission: It may seem a waste of time to some, especially a large piece like this that will be unlikely to sell, but I consider my art a lifestyle that also makes me an income, meaning I will continue to paint, rich or poor. Selling a piece as large as this is a challenge but the interest it caused led to some large canvas commissions, with one being for an artwork of equal size.



It's worth studying this underpainting next to the final painting on the left to observe how art is not just a paint by numbers exercise. There is no doubt that the more pre-planning before a painting the more chance of it's success, but even then, as seen in Palace of Medusa, when all seems perfect, you should still keep your eyes open for chances of improvement, no matter how small. With the sketch on the canvas, the underpainting is applied with very thin sepia oil mixed with white spirits then left to dry overnight. I consider the battle half won when the underpainting is finished.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



The next step is getting the background in. Working the background first means you don't have to worry about the edges of the foreground figure. If you painted the foreground figures first the background would be stiff and fiddley to do, and would also take a long time. That said, I recently had the honour to watch the great Donato Giocola paint at his studio in Brooklyn and he did the opposite, stating for that particular painting that he wanted to get the main element down first as the deadline was tight, I guess meaning that the background could be as loose or as tight as he had time for, but quite rightly the figure had to be perfect. For this painting I was my own client so time was not a concern.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Working the background first doesn't mean you have to get it perfect before moving to the figures. I like to work the painting as a whole then return to the background near the end to pull the painting together. It's just important to get in those big bold strokes that overlap the figures first and also it's a good gauge to judge the lights and darks needed for your figures. Figures painted on a white background might look very washed out when placed against a dark background later. Here I'm working with more opaque colors over the top of my dry underpainting.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



This process is called blocking in and is the journeyman part of painting. At this stage I am constantly referencing anatomy books, my own sketches and photos of the models I shot. I paint more detailed anatomy than I will eventually show in the finished art as it is more important to know what's under the skin than how the skin's surface looks. Relying purely on photo reference, as touched on earlier, will result in amateur looking art. The reason for this is that without anatomical knowledge you will just be painting shapes that you don't understand and this will ultimately tire your eyes and lead to major mistakes. Also different light sources can create shadowed shapes that can be confused with anatomy.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



When painting fantasy creatures it's worth referencing the real world. Here I studied reference of goats in order to make the legs ring true. I've also faded the hooves into the background to keep the viewer's eyes from leaving the painting and to bring the focus back to the central figure. The eye will always seek out contrast and detail, but too much contrast and detail will be tiresome, leading to a laboured and stiff looking artwork. Knowing when to detail and when not to detail is key to good composition and confident looking art. You could try 90% mass to 10% detail as a working model then use your eye to add more detail until you get to the point where the art is no longer improving.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With the painting blocked in with monotone colours it's now time to think about colour and blending. I will consult constantly my little 8"X5" oil colour rough during the rest of the painting. As stated before, a lot of artists don't bother with this stage, which I think is a huge mistake as the very essence of the final painting is contained here; the contrast, the colour, the mood, all the problems worked out in miniature beforehand. To try to work out all those problems on the final 36"X48" canvas is just making a rod for your back.



As I started the painting in earth tones I now work in the cooler tones on top. This makes it easier to see what I'm doing as well as creating a nice vibrancy which will show through the thinner paint. At this stage I add more linseed oil to my thinner to make the paint flow better and stay wet longer for the blending stage. This may look like I'm simply blocking in again but what I'm doing is using the anatomy in the block-in stage as a guide to more subtle blending.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With a soft, dry brush I bend the edges of the anatomical joints and muscles to create realistic flesh. If I'd done this without the block-in stage where I plotted the muscle underneath I would have ended up with a painting more in the style of bad airbrush art where the artist had worked purely from photos, .i.e., working with less information, without the knowledge of what is under the skin. During my studio days we referred to such artists as 'surface painters'. Ouch! Knowing what's under the skin leads to a figure with proper weight and life.



At this stage the oils are starting to dry and it is the perfect time to add more white to the colours I have already mixed. I then gently paint in the highlights then blend again with a soft brush into the paint already on the figure. At this stage we are truly painting and the figure starts to step out of the canvas. Here I also work outside the figure on the edges, painting into the background to further pop the figure forward. The lighting I used when photographing my reference models was pre-planned to make the painting dimensional. I used a one point light source, as used in the theatre and throughout art history, to carve out a human form recognizable even at a distance. This is called chiaroscuro.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



It's crucial to step back from your art at various stages to gauge if you are going in the right direction. Sometimes it's possible to make the art worse if you don't take time to reevaluate. A good tip is to look at it in a mirror. This old trick will show up any mistakes you might have made. With Artemis almost complete I work in more of the background around her. Holding up your hands like a film director will block out the less completed areas and will give you a confidence boost by showing the painting partially finished and will spur you on. At this point you will find a new speed take hold as you will be deep in the creative zone, looking forward to the next days painting rather than dreading it.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With one figure under my belt the next one goes in twice as smooth as I now have the a complete figure to study and compare for strength of shadow and highlight. Until now there was a lot of search and find. Now with most problems already worked out I can use the same methods for the satyr. At this stage I also paint the rock around him as I work on painting his flesh.



With everything painted I move in for the final layer of paint. It might seem like a daunting task to start painting on top of work that is already finished to the eye of the average viewer, but it can make the difference between an average piece of art and a sensational finish when the color glazing goes in. To make a glaze mix up some medium, your choice of either white spirit or turpentine plus linseed oil at 50/50%. I choose turpentine. Now I tint the medium with a mix of green and sepia then glaze the figure with a large brush.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Glazing is the fastest stage as the color is transparent for the most part and so all the work you have done still shows through. This is what gives the kind of depth to an oil painting that simply cannot be reproduced in print or on screen. The reason being that light bounces back through the layers creating a luminescence that can only be appreciated by seeing the original oils. I add thin blue variants for the thinner flesh and red variants for the nose cheeks and ears.



Glaze the helmet and add detail then tackle the spear. I've left the spear until last as I needed the body finalized first as I only want to do this once. Using a raised straight edged stick I run a loaded paintbrush along the edge for support and very carefully work the straight lines. This is probably the trickiest part of the painting as you need a very steady hand. The best brush for this is a long-haired brush known as a 'rigger' as it will hold a lot of paint for a long uninterrupted stroke.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



After a few hours of work the glaze will begin to dry and this is the perfect time to add some highlights to the flesh. With a dry brush the edges will blend perfectly into the glazed colours without leaving brush strokes. Remember to have a rag handy to wipe the dry brush on as it will pick up a little paint during each blending stroke which you don't want to lay back down again. So the method here is: dry brush blend, wipe on rag, dry brush blend, etc...



Only now do I concern myself with detail and add the bow, which adds a nice diagonal to complement the downward thrust of the spear. The links of the chain were painted with very thin paint and a fine sable brush. Special attention is spend touching up the face and helmet as this is the most critical part of any painting containing a figure. Everyone, artist or not, will linger on the face, especially a woman's face, so it better be good. I take the time to dab and blend some subtle flesh tones and the highest highlights. Once this is done I continue to add detail throughout the figure.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



As before, with one figure glazed the next goes in twice as smooth. Note when it comes to hair it's best not to try and paint every strand as the hair will end up looking greasy (unless that is the intent). Also note the hair will tend to show more colour at the edges where light passes through.



Most of my ornamentation is created without reference. Just imagine where, say, the necklace would fall by judging how gravity would pull each necklace link over the bones and muscles. If the 'imagine gravity' method proves too difficult then reshoot wearing a necklace or plan all costume and jewelry needed at the original photoshoot stage. I spent years studying gold and jewelry until I no longer have any reference in front of me. Painting without reference is one of the most freeing experiences in painting, but you will have to study hard to earn this freedom.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Before I go to the final stage I need to know that I'm not leaning on colour to give me value. I photograph the art and print out a black and white version of this stage to study before adding more colour. The reason for this is sometimes weak values, which are the darks and lights running from black through gray to white, can be compensated for by rich colour glazes. A viewer may not know why they prefer another painting with less colour but with the same drama. Most likely they are drawn to the better painting due to the secret strength gained by the true value. As a young artist I remember seeing book jacket art printed in black and white catalogues and wondering why the art, so impressive in colour, was so flat in grayscale. The reason was the values were weak.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



After a day's break I oil out the entire painting and glaze in colour. First off I add an overall glaze of golden greens to add more lushness to the art plus some dull blues to the satyr's flesh and the heroine's helmet and skin. I also decide to add more sheen to the muscles of the heroine. Even if your figure is anatomically correct as regards your reference you should still do what you can to improve the art, even if it means veering away from reality. Remember, you will eventually throw away all reference, leaving the final art to stand alone. The reference is there only to serve and is not the boss of your art.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I decide to place a weighted bangle on Artemis's right arm as the arm not only looked plain but also a bit stiff. I also boldly add a cloak to balance the figure and give her more flow, and glaze more colours into the background. It's good to add some colour from the background into the flesh tones as flesh will reflect the environment. We are more reflective than you would think, especially when sweat is involved. To show a body sweating there is no need to show big blobs of comic book droplets. A flushed face and reflective skin will do the trick.

The Sacrifice

The Secrets to Understanding Light



As touched on before, painting a large canvas for exhibition and possible sale is a high risk venture as selling large canvases is hard. The first obvious reason is that they are priced higher and less people have that kind of money to spend. Another reason is that not everyone has the available space to hang a large painting. So why take the risk? The main reason for me was to make an impression.

My running joke each year is to predict the Archibald Prize winner announced each year in Sydney, Australia. ‘Which one is biggest?’, I call out. People automatically head toward a large painting before moving to smaller works. Large doesn’t mean best of course, but when it’s large *and* good it is a great magnet. It also requires a great deal of confidence as there is no hiding bad workmanship at this scale.



My previous painting ‘Artemis and the Satyr’ made the right impression when exhibited at my second IlluXCon in 2010, and although it didn’t sell it did lead to a commission of the same scale. Here at “36”X48” is the underpainting for The Sacrifice. This size would be no big deal to an abstract painter splashing paint around, but most fantasy artists paint at around 18”X25” because of the fine detail and finesse required for this kind of art. Painting large has it’s downside in that my output is not so prolific due to the time spent on large works, but the sense of satisfaction and pride when a large work is complete makes it worthwhile. The buyer for this approached me as I was packing up in the final minutes of the exhibition, which led me to wonder on possible opportunities other artists who packed up earlier had missed.



A black and white study in preparation for The Sacrifice. This kind of monochromatic painting is also known as Grisaille. This for me is the most important and most enjoyable stage as I get to work fast and furious without worrying about detail or reference. What makes this stage most important is that it tells me at a glance how the light will play on the final art and whether the art will succeed or fail.

Once again the fact that a lot of artists skip this stage is astounding to me as it takes so little time compared to the many hours they'll spend trying to work this out on a large scale as they paint. Remember, if you make a mistake at the first stage it will be compounded in the next stage, and so on. This is why these preliminary stages, the sketching, anatomy study, the value and colour studies, are known as 'The Foundation', without a solid foundation the art will fail just like a house built on a swampy slope.



Here is the colour study. These little studies are often referred to as thumbnail sketches. I usually do them A4 size or smaller. The great fantasy artist Roy Krenkel (1918-1983) would take the term literally by painting his book jacket thumbnail sketches at postage stamp size!

Perfect anatomy is not a major concern at this stage, and I use no reference at this point, only imagination. Solidity and mood is what's important here, I should be able to squint my eyes and foresee the impact of the final painting. If you can afford a good skeleton and an anatomical model for the major painting stages to come then it is a worthwhile investment. At the time of writing the best anatomical models I've seen (and own) can be found here: www.thegnomonworkshop.com

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



This is a great stage to study for the difference between the underpainting and the covering of more opaque paint on top. The paint on top is not much thicker than the paint below it simply contains more white and raw sienna in the mix. Burnt umber doesn't cover so well but is great at adding richness to shadows. The only time I add thick paint is for texturing, as thick paint isn't fluid enough to blend using this kind of smooth skin technique. This century's art masters such as Lucian Freud (1922-2011) painted flesh with thick paint, and it's a marvel to study, but that was his style. Freud's kind of brushwork is rarely seen in fantasy art because fans like to get involved in the scene rather than be distracted by the technique used. This is not to say your work should look photographic, you should always be improving on your reference via color and more fluid line and composition, then add a bit of bravura brushwork in the background and the outer edges.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



One stage further and you can see the very subtle changes that I'm talking about. The expression on her face for instance has been intensified slightly adding a further depth of emotion. Look to the eyebrows and compare to the previous stage, It's hardly noticeable, but keep going along that path and you will break the shackles akin to the uninspired slaves of photo-rendering. I have also lightened just outside her right arm to bring the figure closer and made every effort to get the right combination of soft form verses hard edge.

Note the hard shadow under her left breast as opposed to the soft form shadow of the shoulder muscles and ribs. A common flaw with artists who have skipped the basics of light and shadow will be that their work looks 'fuzzy' simply because they hide their indecisions in soft shadow. Hard shadow will drop from protruding objects (drop shadow), soft shadow will turn on soft forms (form shadow). Remember that simple formula and your work will have weight and dimension.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here I've glazed darker darks and lighter lights along with color for the flesh tones. Although I work with muted colors there is still a wide range of blues greens reds and ochres here to make the skin feel like it's soft, bony, filled with blood, and blued by veins under the surface. I also make sure that areas under the arms and breasts are painted paler than areas receiving more sunlight. A common error artists make is using models with sun bed tans. Tanning is a modern phenomenon which an Aztec would find bizarre behavior. To make your art come alive you need to understand the subject you are painting, how they live and work and how their environment affects them, whether they are fictional or real. Method actors call this 'The Truth' and you should strive for that same truth if you want your art to last. Take a look at some fantasy art from the eighties where amazon women sported perms and gaudy eighties makeup to get what I mean.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



A new day and another round of glazing. With a glaze of oil medium applied to the surface and spread out with a soft brush I work on top while it's still wet adding more blues in the pale areas, blending them into the white areas I laid down in the last stage. Some students misunderstand rules like, 'you should never use white straight from the tube', I know this because I was once in fear of white too. What the rule really means is don't just leave it there to dry as pure white. You can see how bleached out she would look if I left her with the dazzling white flesh of the previous stage. When mixing color there is no need to mix all your paint on the palette, sometimes it's hard to judge colors until they are applied. Here I mix the colors as I blend, picking some color from one area and applying it to another for even more color variations, all the time taming the white as I go.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Now we are composing with not only form but also with light, to draw the eye to what's most important...the face! Great artists through the centuries have used light to compose pictures and create magic. Walt Disney called it the 'Pool of Light'. The old masters such as Rembrandt (1606-1669) and Caravaggio (1571-1610) who pioneered the method knew it as chiaroscuro. The eye follows light, contrast and detail, a good reason to keep non essential detail to a minimum. Over detailed artwork is tiring on the eye and can look amateurish. Some artists try to impress with bedazzling detail, filling every square inch of canvas in an attempt to hide their lack of foundation skills. Don't be one of them.

An interesting note on Caravaggio's constant violent behavior (He once killed a man in a brawl) was recently attributed to lead poisoning caused by handling lead-heavy, Flake White oil color. Lead is rarely found in paints today apart from traffic markings, although I can remember true Flake White, warning intact, still being sold in art stores a mere decade ago, so beware.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



On a large painting I'll use a Mahl Stick to keep from dragging my arm across the wet paint and to keep my hand steady when painting fine detail. A Mahl Stick is simply a stick with a cotton rag bunched into a ball and tied to the end. You hold the stick end in one hand with the ball end resting outside the painting then use the raised stick to balance your arm on. Professional ones can be bought from art stores and sometimes have a leather pouch attached, but I have always made my own. An old cane or a stick with a hook make handy Mahl Sticks that you can hang from your drawing board. Another good idea is to use the old swivel braced clamp from a discarded swivel lamp to fashion a semi permanent Mahl Stick to the top of your easel or drawing board that requires no ball end.

Here is the finished art proving that solid foundation skills the understanding of light are powerful allies in the war against flat art.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

Part Two

ADVANCEMENT

"He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast."
— Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

Painting with Mud

Here is my palette for the Painting 'The Captive'. I have used various palette methods over the years, some complicated to the point of science rather than art. In the early days I would lay out every colour under the rainbow in lines of gradated hues from the lightest value to the darkest (known as colour strings). But as I grew in confidence I broke it down to one light, one dark and one midtone of each colour, and the regimented look of the palette began to disappear.

Recently I had the good fortune to meet one of the greatest fantasy artists of this century, the great Donato Giancola, and watched him paint in his Brooklyn studio. He was developing his 'mud palette' idea at the time, which is not for the faint hearted as it almost goes against the theory of keeping your colours pure in case you end up with, well...mud!

The idea is to study whatever isolated area you are painting, say flesh, and work out all the values and colour hues right there on the palette so that none of the colours are being influenced by the white space of the palette around each individual color. It might look like mud but by placing, say a muddy orange next to a muddy blue the colours will still vibrate, but in a subtle way.

For 'The Captive' I decided to give Donato's mud palette a go and discovered what Donato had done was to distill all his years of value study and all his years of colour study, and brought both together to create a muddy rainbow in which you could dip into the darks and lights at will in a very spontaneous way. Like all great ideas it was simple genius.

I've adapted it here only slightly. The first step is to wet the palette with a mix of 50/50% Linseed Oil/ turpentine to keep the colours fresh then lay the colours down. Be sure to place the cap back on your dipper to keep fumes at bay.

On one side I have all my warm tones and on the other side all my cool tones, then down the centre I have a line of white. Near the bottom of the mud I have mixed in warm and cool grays. With the 50/50 oil medium mix you can keep the palette 'live' all day by adding a touch of medium when the paint feels like it's seizing up.

The Mud Palette



Painting with Mud

Even though 'The Captive' appears to be filled with vibrant colour, it is in fact created from muddy colours placed together to give the maximum vibrancy without looking garish. If you isolate any colour square from within 'The Captive' you will see how muddy even the brightest colour is, proving the theory that all colour is relative. Any colour can appear brighter or duller depending on what colour you place next to it. Special attention is required when using white. As you can see here even the lightest tone looks like dull gray when isolated against pure white. White used straight from the tube will look very amateurish, so resist. Like I've said before, I have no fear of placing white directly on the canvas, but I will always blend into it or glaze on top. In order to judge colour better most artists stain their canvases before laying colour down. Some use a muddy green but most use umber or sienna. Any colour then placed on top of these muted tones will immediately look brighter than if placed on top of a bare white canvas. Donato, the eternal art student, also reminds us of the profound quote by French artist, Delacroix...

"I can paint you the skin of Venus with mud, provided you let me surround it as I will."
- Eugene Delacroix 1798-1863



The Forbidden Kingdom The Fruits of Self Promotion



This 36"X24" Canvas art was commissioned by Canadian brothers and publishers Neil and Leigh Mechem each of whom share a life long love of Conan. They had also seen 'Artemis and the Satyr' at IlluXCon 2010 and wanted the same color scheme and mood, proving once again the power of self promotion. So now the uncommissioned 'Artemis and the Satyr' had convinced two more collectors to trust me with commissions for larger than usual oil paintings, in fact the boys told me they would have bought Artemis but didn't have the space for it. Painting Conan was an end to a path I'd been walking down since I was fifteen years old. The final canvas at this time of writing is also being reproduced as a limited edition print for sale worldwide from: www.girasolcollectables.com



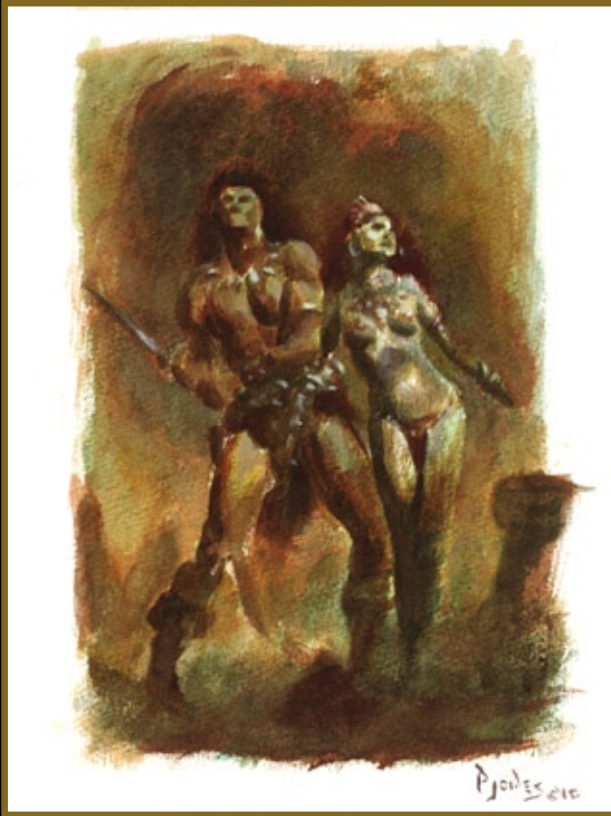
The crucial key to strike here is in making Conan recognizable to fans of the books. There's no doubt now, though, that the world considers Frank Frazetta's painted version, rather than writer Robert. E. Howard's description to be the definitive Conan. I also see John Buscema's Conan as a great source of inspiration. This step by step will be the model exercise in how understanding anatomy when using photo reference is essential.

I will be standing in as the model for Conan. I find that bodybuilders tend to look too unnatural as models and prefer to see a figure hewn from a hard life rather than a gym. For that I will have to add muscle to my own puny body until it fits the Conan ideal.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P

a.



At the point when I made this painting I pledged to myself to continue on my path as a painter of the fantastic and leave the advertising business, which had derailed me for too many years and numbed my dreams. IlluXCon was the wake up call, and as a symbol of my pledge I got rid of my drafting board and replaced it with the biggest easel I could buy!

The benefits of an easel over a drafting board is that it can hold large canvases and can be elevated up and down to reach the best position for painting.

Above is a colour rough, Fig,a., done on watercolour paper. I could have done it on computer much faster but the colours would shift when printing out, also, since I painted it with the same oils that I'll be painting the full canvas with it is easy for me to understand what exact tube colours to use for the final. The colour rough is A4 size, just perfect for taping beside my easel for easy reference. In order to tape reference next to my easel I've bought a large sheet of MDF board from the local hardware store and placed my canvas against it on the easel, leaving the MDF board sticking out each end. You can see this set up in the chapter, 'An Artist's Studio'.

Once again I start on the background with the biggest brushes I own, sometimes even using a five inch household brush to begin with. Once I've blocked in the various cloud shapes I use a dry rag to wipe away areas or to softly blend with. Other times I'll use the rag itself as a painting tool using the oil I've wiped from one area to transfer the paint to another area. Since the colours belong in hue and value this is a great way of painting in a natural organic way.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is a shot from the posing session I did for the piece. A pretty tricky process where I worked off the reverse drawing and used a two second remote to take the picture and match the pose. I usually take about fifty shots to get the perfect one. This ends up as a pilates workout as it is much harder to strike intense poses like this than you would think. From the fifty or so shots I open all in Adobe bridge and choose the best until I've culled it down to around five. Sometimes I will use elements of all five and piece together in Photoshop to get the best reference I can. Note below the change in anatomy bulk wise. As stated time and again: photos are for reference only.



Time to block in one of the most iconic characters in fantasy history. I surround myself with Conan reference and work on the task of turning myself into the ideal of Conan. I enjoyed painting the scar on his cheek. Very tricky to paint a brawny character with a scar that is also the hero and make him look like someone we trust. The fact that the girl is clinging to him for dear life makes this work. Note I have also changed Conan's eye focus to give him a more purposeful look rather than the retrospective look I have in the reference photo.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



Here I've blocked in the figures with a second layer of paint, establishing the figures in a rough fashion rather than trying to blend them to perfection in one hit. The reason I do this is to work the painting as a whole. It's very easy to lose sight of the overall image if you slave away in parts at the beginning. This way I can step away from the art and see what needs fixed here and there without it being a big deal to slap some more paint on to correct errors. For example the lips of the girl I felt looked a little 'mean' in the underpainting and have plumped them up here to much more attractive effect.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



With everything blocked in I can now work in stages. I plan for the head and torso in one sitting, stopping at natural bridges such as the arm ring. This is an interesting stage to study as it shows blended paint on top of the blocked-in stage. This may seem like a lot of work, basically painting the figure twice, but it moves fast as I'm laying the semi-opaque colors on top of established groundwork making improvements as I go with a lot of confidence as I'm already familiar with how the anatomy sits from the first pass. Notice how much more solid and fleshy the figure looks compared to the blocked-in forearm still awaiting its fresh layer of blended paint. Well worth the effort in my mind.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



This is another good stage to study. Compare these two close ups to appreciate how delicately the face should be treated. As always remind yourself, as I do, that this is the main area the painting will succeed or fail on. This stage of the face shows the block-in compared to the third pass opposite, where I have added more opaque paint after this stage has dried, which is usually overnight. I could call the painting finished at the stage on the opposite page by leaving out the glazing, but then it wouldn't be my style.

One of my favorite artists, Jeff Jones (1944-2011) would leave many paintings at this block-in stage to meet the deadlines he took on for publishing houses in the seventies, but I like my paintings as lush as I can possibly make them. Private commissions usually pay more than publishing commissions which leaves me more time to indulge.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Lots of sable brushwork was used on the headdress and eyes here, and lots of blending with a soft dry brush. As a side note while we're discussing blending, as already noted it's important to keep blending brushes clean as oil paint attracts hair and dust like a magnet, so a studio with wooden floors is better than a carpeted studio, wearing woolly clothes is also a very bad idea and make sure you keep your pets out of the studio!

I want to keep the girl pale which is a hell of a lot harder to paint than a tanned person, but in this case more interesting to contrast with Conan's tanned torso. Normally, being right handed, I would work on finishing the left figure first but the girl's face is so much more delicate to paint that I needed to tackle it in some finished degree so as to relax.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P

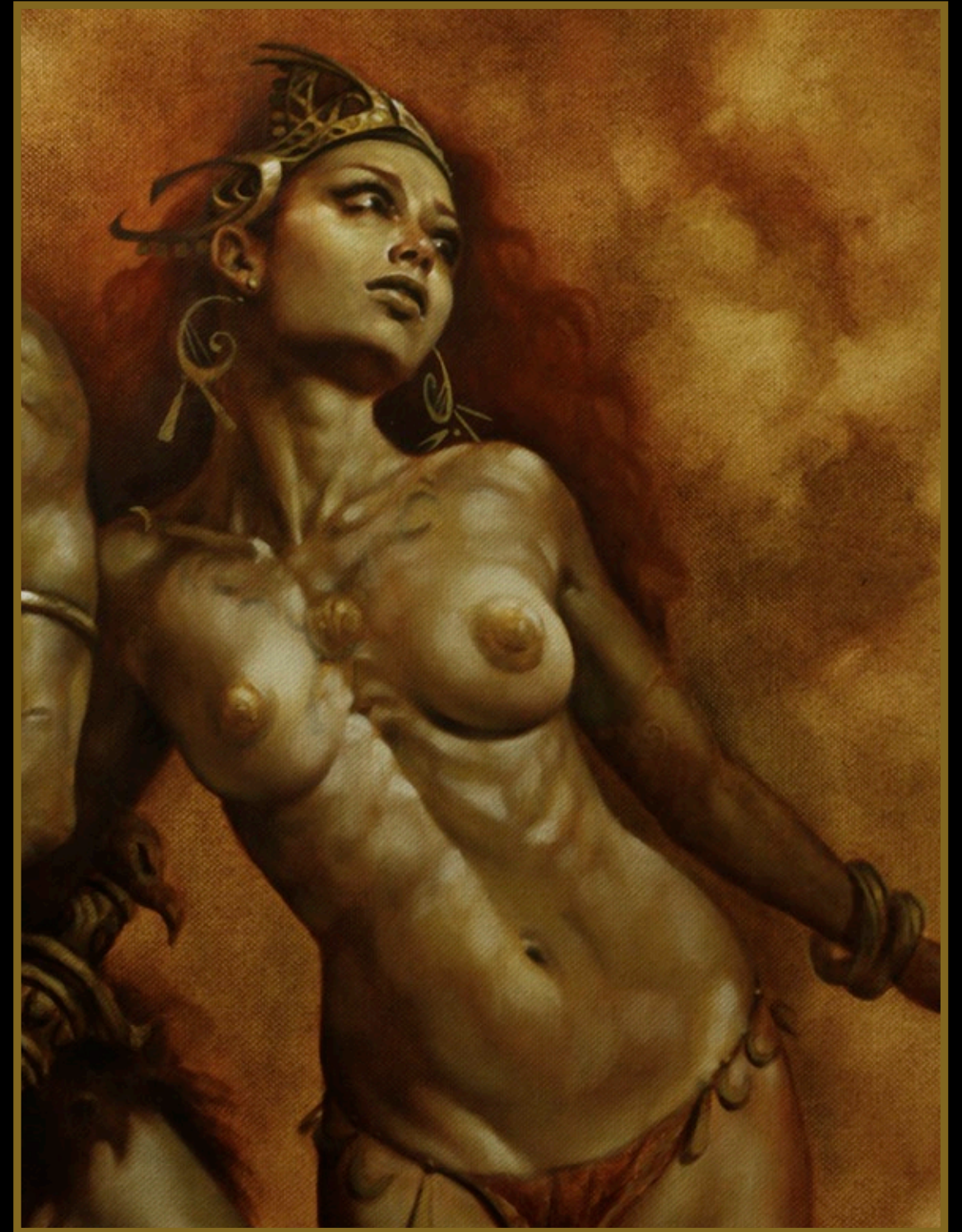


Here is Conan fully painted and blended. Now I can work the values of the rest of the artwork around him. The background looks pretty sketchy now in comparison but just like the last stage I can work on this without using the wild brushwork needed to establish it in the first place. Painting is more than just laying down paint, you need to plan steps ahead so you don't paint aimlessly and hope for the best. Painting with the unplanned method leads to most paintings being abandoned as failures (unless it's abstract art). With my solid method in place the girl is something to really look forward to painting. With Conan done the painting is less of a mystery and I can now reference him for value control.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With Conan's weight and tone established, and the girl's face having the right amount of blending to make her soft yet dimensional I can now match the body to the face with much more ease. The danger of using tools like the airbrush for a face is in the loss of dimension and depth due to over softening, so avoid the temptation as over blending in oils can bring about a similar effect. Even after decades of study and with my multiple photo references pinned up I still turn to my anatomy books and anatomy figures to make sure the anatomy is correct. I am working from two different photos of a figure so I could easily make a Frankenstein monster if I'm not careful. I paint in more anatomy than I need so that I can soften the flesh yet show bone and muscle where I choose.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Although the paint was laid down over a leisurely hour long period it's still wet and easily blended with a soft, dry brush. This is where I discern what to blend back most, it's also the time to be wary that I'm not blending everything to the same degree.

A bad habit some artists get into from having their ego stroked with the admiring words, 'it looks like a photo'. This kind of admiration is what made Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) so miserable during his later paintings. Due to the public's admiration for his realistic art he was no longer 'allowed' by publishers to return to the style of his greatest period when his work was less 'photo-realistic'. He produced a series of energetic portrait studies for the 1966 remake of 'Stage Coach' and begged the film company to publish them at their rough stage, but they insisted he 'finish' them. The difference between his brilliant studies and the dull rendered art they insisted he proceed with was tragic. Norman was a victim of his own success. Art shouldn't look like a photo. Reference photos are mostly dull because they have no artist's voice.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With the paint still wet, but starting to dry, I add more white to the colors on my palette and paint on top of the blended art once more. I don't add more linseed oil to this mix as it would be too gluey and would move the paint around too much, or worse, pick up what's underneath. With a soft dry brush I blend again, wiping the brush on a dry rag every few strokes as I go, this time getting the right degree of softness and paleness in the flesh. Make sure your rag is lint free or you'll be adding cloth particles to your art. Old cut up cotton tee shirts are good.

A word of warning though, rags should be thrown out after each painting or they can be a combustible fire hazard due to the soaked in solvent. Some artists keep a steel bin to throw their rags into for fire safety, some even half fill their bins with water to be certain. If you work in a wooden home you need to be twice as diligent.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With all the blending on the figures done I return to the background to tie it all together, blending the clouds into the softness of the hair and adding more colour. Once again I could call this finished and go straight to the details and be done with it, with no one aware that it could have been better. No one but me that is. This is the time to sit back and imagine it all with more intense colour, to recompose with light and shadow and draw the eye more intensely to the faces. Making more of the shadow across the legs not only adds atmosphere but draws the viewer's eye back into the picture instead of wandering away, maybe toward a possible competitor's gallery work.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



All the way through the painting I've constantly tinkered with the faces and it's critical that I get Conan right as he is such a cultural icon. Obviously I don't have Conan as a model and am working off the reference photo of myself from before. What I do have is a legacy of great art from Frank Frazetta, Boris Vallejo, and John Buscema to draw inspiration from. But I must make Conan my own, to add my vision of the heroic into the ongoing art catalogue, and make it worthy to stand next to the giants of illustration. And so I tinker more, back and forth while also detailing the necklace.



Although I'm working on the body jewelry I always have one eye on the girl's face, adding touches that no one will probably notice, but I think add immeasurably to the romance of the piece. It would take a keen eye to see that I have altered the position of the eyebrow a touch, adding a hint of sorrow to the expression and therefore telling a deeper story. I've also added more flow to the hair and changed the simple coin shapes on the headdress to look more kettle shaped. Tiny details like that bring a lot of pleasure to the wandering eye.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Now for the finale; the color glazing. Normally I would start on the left hand figure, but in this case there is much more to do on the girl. It takes a sturdy set of nerves to paint on top of work already finely blended, but with the paint underneath fully dry after two days I mix up very transparent colors and before I lay them down I do some oiling out by brushing and spreading a thin layer of 50/50 mix of turpentine/ linseed oil over the figure. Now the colours float on top of the oiled out surface giving me many hours to add more colour and highlight without worry, as I can simply wipe them off if need be. You can also oil out a surface by rubbing a rag soaked in the glaze medium rather than use a brush. I put the colours down very quickly as by this point I know/own the painting. I am at this stage a very confident boss.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Note the cool grays around the eyes where the skin is thinner and pink tones on the cheeks and nose adding to the sense that she is flushed from the chase by her unseen pursuers. Also in the mix are shades of green reflecting the environment. The skin has many colors and to simply paint in 'flesh tones' as in browns and yellows is a tragic rookie mistake. As a general rule an imaginary band across the face from ear to ear usually contains the warmest colours, cheeks, nose, ears. Once again I take a soft dry brush and blend the colors together.



I have a mix that is workable all day and so I move onto Conan and apply the same techniques while she is drying. I come back hours later when the paint is tacky on her and add touches of the paint I mixed earlier, which is also drier on my palette, I then blend touches here and there where needed. It's important not to thin the pre-mixed palette paint further as it will 'pull off' what you had laid down on the linseed oil surface. Very delicate strokes here. You will learn by touch how heavy to lean on the brushes as you become more experienced.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



To the untrained eye there is not much difference between this page and the opposite page, but if you look closely there is a world of difference in finish and subtle colors. Note here the skin is almost all shades of umber and yellow ochre whereas the opposite panel shows a layer of transparent greens where veins run through the body, blues where hair is under the chin, pinks at the knuckles, etc. I also use the longer drying time of this stage to add ornamentation to the knife and abrasions to the chest. Conan has been through many scrapes and he should reflect that; this is another reason not to use bodybuilders straight from the gym, unless they are truly tough from previous worldly scrapes.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



When the transparent colors are tacky I add more yellow and white to the paint already on my palette and paint/blend as I go for more buttery colors that cover. For the highlights I'll mix some blue and white. It's OK to use pure white on top of wet colors as it will blend and dull with as you work, but a general big no, no, is to place pure white on top of a dry painting, as pure white is rarely found in nature, and therefore will look unnatural. As a test open any old master artwork up in Photoshop, sample the highest white, then compare it to the white color swatch in the tool box next to it. There is no pure white in this painting either, sample and see.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is the entire artwork before the color glazes were applied. See how the little details make a world of difference as in the gold trim on the girl's toga. At this stage I'll turn the picture upside down and sideways to get a fresh eye and see it as the art director or collector will see it. I think the rocks are a bit too shaded and will fix before glazing. Different views will help you find mistakes or see where improvements can be made. Remember to use a mirror too or to bring a photographed copy into Photoshop and flip it horizontally or vertically. Any mistakes will be immediately obvious. Opposite is the final glazed version.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



If there is time before an absolute final pass I'll first put the painting out of sight for a day or two then come back and see if there is anything I missed when I was working too close to the art to see. At this point I will take a small brush and add little details here and there during the glazing such as the refined scabbard and the jingly, jangle stuff hanging at the girl's waist. Also I brushed some transparent Indian red over the girl's hair to make it glow with light. I get requests for my flesh tone palette, but it changes according to the background which should always reflect on the skin. For this painting I used: yellow ochre, raw sienna, Indian red, burnt sienna, burnt umber, sap green, olive green, cerulean blue and titanium white.

Valley of the Serpent Taking Artistic Risks



Working on personal projects is the perfect time to take risks. As there was no art director or time frame I used this piece to experiment with new techniques. The first thing I tried was priming the board with a more diluted gesso solution to eliminate brush strokes. Brush strokes can be a problem when working at a small size, in this case 18.5"X25", especially faces, which are about two inches in diameter on the original painting.

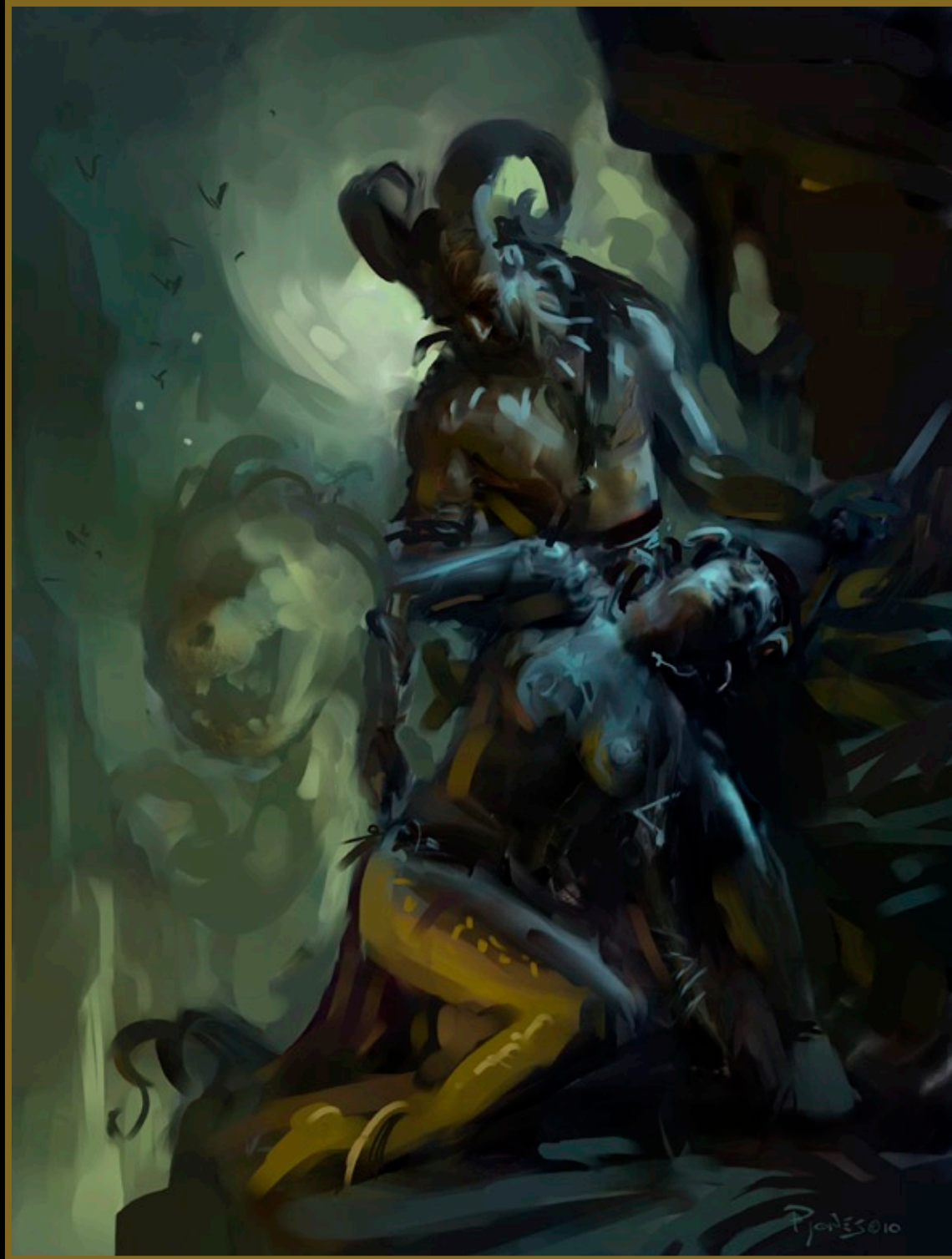
Gesso is a primer that stops the oil soaking into porous surfaces such as illustration board. Some artists brush on a coat then sand it down, then repeat the procedure until they get a classic 'egg shell' finish. The other solution is to work bigger on pre-primed canvas. I tried the thin route, which left the surface I wanted without the need for sanding, but Unfortunately I thinned it too much.



Everything went well during the underpainting. I used acrylic paint which dries fast. No problem there as you can safely paint oil on top (just not the other way around). At this stage all seemed fine, it was my next experiment that did the damage. As seen earlier I had tinkered with water based oils for a while and really liked their non-toxic qualities and especially the easy clean up with soap and water. Unfortunately I also added white spirits to the water mixable linseed oil medium to get a longer drying time and better flow, which had worked OK on a well primed surface before. I did this because the blending qualities before using spirits were 'sticky' rather than oily. The original 'just add water technique' was also destroying my brushes when the sticky drying/blending time kicked in. You can safely add spirits to water based oils until about a 50% ratio, from that point on you must clean your brushes with spirits afterwards.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Before encountering the painting disaster of the next stage I painted this color rough on computer using the software, Corel Painter. I printed it out and taped it to the large A1 piece of thin hardboard on my easel. The hardboard gives me the old-school flexibility of an easel with the extra surface enjoyed by architects for taping reference to. A note on color roughs: just as I am not a slave to the detailed sketches I use to start a painting I will, if need be, veer off these colors too if they look too unreal in the final art. What works in abstract paint here could look like blue skin instead of moonlight at the later stage (which is why I did veer off).

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



This is where it all went wrong. As I painted the porous surface was sucking up the oil until it was almost like acrylic paint, leaving me no time to blend. I wiped the whole thing back with spirits and painted a clear acrylic base over the acrylic underpainting and let it dry, ironically ending up with the brush strokes akin to gesso primer I wanted to eliminate. I started again and all was going well with the background until the paint started drying in its usual sticky way, then worst of all, it started picking up islands of the acrylic color from the underpainting, right through the primer to the original board! I bulled ahead and painted a fairly decent background considering I was lifting off as much paint as I was putting down. The next day the surface was still sticky and one rub test pulled away a patch of paint! It was a disaster, and for the first time in decades I made the decision to abandon the artwork and start again.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I threw the old artwork in a corner all bent up (this is known as artistic temperament) and started again from scratch. This time I bought some flat sponge brushes which went some way to reducing the brush strokes and primed the new board properly. It was a heartache repeating all the work again but by the time I started blocking in the figure the pain vanished. Had I learned my lesson from the failed experiment? 'There are no mistakes, only better understanding', is a motto I live by. I decided to mix a jar of 50% odorless spirit and 50% linseed oil, (not the water soluble kind, for me that jar will never be opened again) and thinned the water soluble oils like normal oils. Success.

So if I'm now using oil based medium with water soluble oils why don't I just finish the painting using traditional oils? For a number of reasons, one being that I had invested in a full range of large tubed water soluble paints and refused to give up the fight at the first hurdle. I also wanted to exhaust every avenue before giving up on a new kind of oil paints that are non-toxic and can be cleaned with soap and water.

If some company can refine these paints in the future to the quality of traditional oils then they are what I will use. For this painting I will explore all the possibilities to find an in-between solution that will work. In the meantime I must go back to cleaning my brushes in solvent at the end of each day. When cleaning brushes in solvent it's best not to then finish cleaning them with soap and water but to shape their hairs to a point then wash in soap and water the next day. Some artists clean their brushes with only linseed oil, but this can be expensive and time consuming.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



I had added too much linseed oil to the previous 50/50 mix as a lot of the background in the painting was glossy and still wet the next day. When the ratio of linseed oil exceeds the ratio of turpentine the surface can become too slimy and some colors break up like floating soot. The sticky solution was solved but now the large oily background surface had gathered every airborne dust particle, which is another problem with too much oil. Time for a tonk.

Tonking is a technique named after English artist Henry Tonks (1862-1937) and is pretty simple, but also pure genius. Simply blot the art with a sheet of paper to soak up the oil. Some glazed paint will come with it, but not so much that you notice if you paint thin like me. Now the surface is clear of debris and just the right amount of oil is left to work into.

Painting resumes and is close in quality to traditional oils, which is not surprising considering how much oil I've mixed the paint with. I have since discovered that the pigment in water soluble oils is closer in grade to the student version of the Winsor & Newton traditional oil paints rather than the artist quality grade professionals work with. When mixing paint on my palette I also glaze the palette with the same oily mix so that everything dries at the same speed on both palette and paint surface, that way I'm less likely to remove paint from the artwork with over diluted paint.



I continue painting the figure with the 50/50 mix because of it's great blending properties and also due to the fat over lean principle, which means each layer should never have less fat (oil) than the previous layer, otherwise you may pick up the layer underneath, and years later your paintings will crack due to the top layer drying and shrinking faster than the layer underneath, thereby pulling the paint in all directions causing hairline cracks.

On my visit to the Frank Frazetta museum I noticed Frank's paintings cracking after as little as thirty years, a testament to the speed he painted with and, I guess, his use of cobalt dryer to hurry up drying time. A note on cobalt colors: I have a tube of cobalt blue that is so solid it can no longer be squeezed out without using pliers while other paints bought at the same time still drool oil on the first squeeze. You have to understand which paints dry fastest and add more oil into their mix to keep them supple. Other oil paints that dry fast are siennas, umbers, Manganese blue and violet. My slowest drying oil paints tend to be, yellow ochre, lamp black and titanium white, which suits me fine as I use titanium white more than any other color and need it to stay soft.



For the girl block-in I've gained back my confidence and therefore my control over the painting. I no longer fear the sticky paint as I have discovered by now that it was the addition of even the smallest amount of water that was the culprit, which is a shame as using water was the big draw card. So I mix up a jar of 70% odorless spirits and 30% linseed oil as a thinning medium for the first paint coat and block-in the entire figure and the satyr's legs (I have not used goat legs here as is traditional).

The 70/30% mix is my standard mix for thinning colors to use for blocking in. By the next morning the first layer is completely touch dry, as it should be. No stickiness or oiliness. Now I have the perfect mix for this stage and label the jar 'Block In'. This stage shows the art in mid-block, very roughly laying down opaque paint to further understand the workings of anatomy. I blended roughly beyond this demo shot before starting the next, true, blending stage.

This insight into a block-in in mid stage should give hope to any artist starting off as it shows how scruffy even a professional work looks in the early stage. It's not just magic pouring out of the brush, simply a lot of study and hard work. At the end of the day anyone can learn to paint; it will be the added passion and dedication that will determine the great artists to rise from the ranks of journeymen and journeymen.



It's the next day and for the second coat I continue with my mix of 70% odorless spirits and 30% linseed oil. The fat over lean rule is not broken here as the previous days work will dry before this layer does. I just shouldn't thin this ratio further with spirits, only oils from this point onward.

The mix is buttery enough for me to blend and has none of the stickiness found using the water mix. What have I learned this far from using water based oils? Basically I will use them in future for underpainting and fast color roughs but will skip using water as a thinner in any ratio with spirits or linseed oils. It can be done but tends to keep the oils wet and sticky for days. Wet is easy to tonk, but sticky is a problem I'm not prepared to suffer when I don't need to.

The answer I found using my style of blended art: mix purely with water for underpainting then mix with only spirits/oils for bending. I won't be using the water-mixable linseed oil again as I won't be doing any finished water based oil paintings until things improve. The quality is good but not anywhere near the quality of traditional oils. The mix of the 'water mixable linseed oil' with spirit or traditional linseed oil was probably the biggest mistake I made.



Now I have three labeled jars of medium: One jar named 'underpainting' with 90% spirit /10% oil mix. One jar named 'Block-In/Blend' with 70% spirits/ 30% oil and one jar named 'Glaze' with 50% spirit/ 50% oil, the same mix I use for regular oils.

Here I glaze the girl with a large loaded brush of glazing mix spread very thin then paint on top. The paint will 'float' on top until it starts to dry. This is the period to work in all your colours and details. Once you feel the paint seize up (after around four hours) you can start to do some very subtle blending while adding more opaque detail, back and forth, blend and detail all day long. Was it work the risks? Yes, it's one of my favorite paintings and was reserved and bought by one of the world's biggest fantasy art collectors before IlluXCon 2010 even opened it's doors.

Dawn of the Dead *Commissioned Work*



Dawn of the dead was commissioned on the back of The Forbidden Kingdom, which was fortunate as I had another major oils booked in at the time, 'The Sacrifice', but it was delayed at the client's request, leaving me just enough time to paint this piece while I was still in the Conan moment. Perfect.

When working to commission it's important to give the same passion as you would your personal work, which is key to a successful painting. After making notes from the brief it's time to sit down and cook that information into a decent stew. No matter how difficult the brief seems you will find a way to make magic if you dig deep. Commissions are tougher than personal work as it's not your initial idea, but remember, it's a privilege to be commissioned as it proves another's faith in your professional talent. Consider it an artistic collaboration and hang on for the ride.



As seen before I had experimented with water-mixable oils as a safer alternative to breathing toxic fumes such as turpentine and other solvents. They proved frustrating due to their odd drying habits and stickiness during the blending stages, but were easy to clean and odorless. They also dry to an oil finish when the water evaporates. The underpainting stage uses the largest amount of paint and therefore creates the largest amount of fumes. I decide to use the water based oils with the paints watered down to a wash, making them less sticky and I get a headache free, healthy start to the artwork. So, although experimenting with new materials can be a risk, it's rarely a waste of time. Acrylics can be substituted here but I like the flexibility of wiping back the oils with rags and also the manipulation of oil paint which is next to impossible with acrylics.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Again using the water based oil wash method I create a colour rough on watercolour paper. To stretch water-colour paper simply soak the paper with a wet, wide brush then tape it to a piece of wood using parcel tape, then dry with a hair dryer. As the paper shrinks tight in the heat it will dry to a surface that will not buckle when you lay down thin washes of colour. When the art is dry simply slice with a scalpel or sharp knife using a steel rule edge for guidance. I used oil instead of watercolour for this stage as it gives a much more accurate idea of the final color since it will be the same tube colour I will use on the canvas.

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◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With traditional oils I now use my mix of 90% odorless white spirit and 10% linseed oil to thin my paints and paint the background. I use my paints fairly thin letting the ochres and yellows take care of the opaque covering of the underpainting. I'll also mix a little white into the greens and blues to cover. Using big brushes I lay down all the colours I need for the background then blend them together with a large soft fan brush. The paint will tack up after a few hours and I can then add more opaque colours on top and gently blend some more until all the underpainted background sky is covered.



It's good to get the hair done at this stage to bridge the gap between background and figure, this way I can judge the strengths of the tone of the figure to come. I paint the hair of both figures at to save time as I have the mix all ready to go. With mono colors of phthalo blue and umber brown mixed with various degrees of white (more blue for cooler metal, more brown for warmer metal) I block in the helmet. Now the painting is really cooking. I don't worry about extreme highlights yet as I will add them later during the colour glazing stage.

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Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Once again the onus is on getting Conan right. This is a trickier task than before due to his savage expression in this painting. When anyone contorts their face they immediately look different. I not only studied Frank Frazetta's iconic version but also photos of legendary actor Jack Palance as I heard Frank had modeled his Conan on Jack. Throw that into the mix with myself and the art buyer, both acting the part on camera, and we get my own unique, but still recognizable world version of Conan. A difficult balancing act.



A fellow artist working digitally asked how this stage was done using oils. He compared it to looking like a 'multi-apply layer' in Photoshop. Odd to hear my centuries old technique being akin to digital media, yet, strangely it is similar as I'm glazing thin darks over a previous layer. The reason I start with darks first is it's simply easier to paint this way. The hardest tones to judge are the midtones then the highlights, but once you have the darks in place the midtones are much easier to place on top.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



With the dark glaze still wet I paint directly on top with lighter colours, mixing and blending the midtones on the canvas. It's important not to let any of the lightest colors mix into the darkest areas or all the colors will turn a muddy brown. While the midtones are drying I add some warmer colours to the helmet as the steely gray was too monotone next to the fresh flesh tones. At this stage I'm blocking in with my usual 70%/30% white spirit/linseed oil mix to thin my paints.



Now with the midtones placed and the paint starting to seize up it's very easy to judge the highlights and place them on top without them mixing in too much. I add some blue to the white to cool it and add to both the flesh and the helmet. With every component sharing similar colours the artwork has a harmonious feel to it. Everything looks like it belongs. I have seen lots of art where the artist has used a different colour palette for every object, obviously copying the colours they saw in all the disparate photo reference they had used. I'm not saying all art should be monochromatic but that the color of every object is affected by the colours around it. Not just metal but flesh and anything that is not totally matte. This is known as an analogous or harmonious color scheme.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



The face was a major hurdle and I will return to it through the progress of the painting but for now it is looking good. Here is the torso being worked on at the same time as the previous face close ups. The torso, although covering vastly more area is done in a fraction of the time, simply because it is less complex. I work in areas that have a definite boundary so that I can judge drying times. I've chosen an area that will be around three hours work creating a natural break for lunch. It's good to plan out a work day rather than stumble around, starting and stopping at the will of the painting. Here I block in the darks, checking my anatomy books and model references as I go.



With a big loaded brush I lay down a glazed midtone mix of olive green, burnt umber and raw sienna in between the dark areas from the stage before (which were a mix of burnt umber and phthalo blue). Now with a big, dry, flat brush I softly blend up to the darkest shadows wiping the brush on a rag as I go to keep it soft and thus blending rather than pushing paint around. Time for lunch. When you become your own boss it only works well if you actually tell yourself what needs done and by what time. Then get it done. People that want to be their own boss because they don't like hard work, aren't really cut out to be their own boss.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



After lunch the paint is tacky enough for me to add warmer colors on top such as burnt sienna and yellow ochre, these colors are semi-opaque and easy to work with. For the highlights I add a blue/white mix. A blue/white highlight will give the impression of an overcast day or a jungle area where light is diffused. I also work on Conan's face to match the torso. Next morning when the torso is touch-dry I add the small details on top such as the neck-lace and arm band. I also add some bulging veins to enhance the moment of savage fury.



As I worked on Conan I also worked on the skeleton's helmet, shield and face as they were in the same area and of similar colors, also I was tackling the problems of one helmet so it made sense to do both helmets at the same time rather than to sit back later and solve the same surface problems again from scratch. This way was much faster and helped make the artwork more unified. With a busy composition like this it's a constant struggle to keep the painting fresh. One way is to kill confusion by fading back areas. Here I've faded Conan's leg so we can better read the skeleton. This kind of atmospheric blending is known as Sfumato and is derived from the Italian word for smoke.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Once again we are on high alert. The girl's face has to be tough yet still attractive, which is very tricky. Keeping the facial lines to a minimum is the best way to get around this but not at the expense of her looking like she has had a Botox injection. Delicate stuff.

The girl is important to me here for another reason in that she steers the art away from it's obvious influence, Frank Frazetta's masterpiece: Conan the Destroyer. I'm always trying to break away from Frank's spell but sometimes world's collide in that the patrons of this piece also wanted that look as Frank's destroyer art was one of their favorites, and at the time of my writing just changed hands for \$1,500,000 USD, putting it well out of range of most art collectors.

There is absolutely no doubting Frank's genius, but before we all wilt and give up it must be remembered that he too was influence by imagery, and I would say the crouching skeleton in the foreground here was influenced more for me by the skeleton fight in Ray Harryhausen's (1920-) stop-motion movie sensation, 'Jason and the Argonauts' (1963) may also have been in Frank's mind when he painted his own crouching figure in 'Conan the Destroyer' which shows a very skeleton-like structure through the flesh. I have also found a similar crouching figure in the J. Allen St. John's (1872-1957) painting for the frontispiece of Edgar Rice Burroughs' 'The Chessmen of Mars' published in 1922 which may have also entered the sub-conscious of Ray Harryhausen, and so on through the ages. No doubt a trip to The Louvré would find the influences of Allen St. John.

In a more startling revelation it turned out that Frank had cribbed the fallen figure in his Destroyer art from an obscure painting by french artist Jean-Jules-Antoine Lecomte du Nouÿ (1842-1923) entitled "Les Porteurs de Mauvaises Nouvelles,". Frank could easily have painted the figure without swiping it, but he was working to commission and it got the job done quicker. If he had swiped from a living artist he would have been booed, but no one was having food taken from their mouths here. The myth built around Frank was that he used no reference and this was clearly not the case. This revelation does not diminish his legend for me, in fact it is a relief to find he was human. None of us evolve from a vacuum and I freely acknowledge all the influences here in this homage to Frank and all the great artists that went before me.

Patrick J Jones

♦ I l l u s t r a t o r ♦
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Work down to the points that I can handle in one sitting, which stops here at the wrist and bikini top, all the time tinkering with the face until I get the perfect balance of expression and beauty. I use bigger brushes for the body, but have seen artists paint this size area with the same brush used for the face. Crazy. Bigger brushes will speed up your work with better effect to the art.

A timeless tip for choosing brush sizes is to choose the size you think will work, then choose a bigger size. Note how pale the face looks now in relation to the body. This is why I block in everything before treating the figure as a whole in the glazing stage. With all the masses in place it's much easier to refine each element quickly later.

You can also see here how useful the color rough has been in that I have placed contrasting darks to make the figure pop forward, such as conan's dark toga bringing the pale curve of the girl's hip forward. This is one of the reasons that art triumphs over the reference photography in that you can add this stuff at will over a long period of searching and finding what is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Note also the light of Conan's thigh making the skeleton's jaw read. While you study that area look at how the detail of conan's belt is more subdued as it meets the skeleton's face. These little moments are planned to make sure a complicated composition doesn't become confusing.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here she is blocked in and blended. I add the ornamentation now and paint all the metal parts at the same time paying special attention to where the metal meets the flesh. I will always make sure that the metal edges make some impact on the soft flesh otherwise the metal will give the impression of 'floating' above the flesh. A frozen moment like this can still show action by the placement of objects in motion such as the lifting of the earring, the flowing hair, and the jingle-jangle of the headdress.

Less obvious is the invisible line of action that runs through the body, in this case a sloping, elongated 'S' shape. Line of action is an animation term meaning the first line draw to indicate action onto which you build a figure. A line of action can make even a static figure pulse with life.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



The next day when the previous day's work has dried I lay down a glaze and oil out with a large brush then paint in all the subtle colors needed to make flesh real. With the glaze still wet I can add the fine metal links since the surface is still nice and slippery. For this I use the rigger brush I used to paint the spear in 'Artemis and the Satyr'.

A rigger brush is a sable brush with extremely long bristles that holds lots of medium for a continuous unbroken line. The name 'rigger' was coined because the brush was used primarily by maritime artists to paint the long lines of rigging on sail boat artworks.



Here is the painting two steps back to show you how it looked in it's entirety at the finished blending stage. Once again you can see by comparing this stage to the next, the difference between blending and the final overall glazed art. I could see here by stepping back from the art after a night's break that the highlights were too strong all over especially on the girl and Conan's helmet. The light tones between the girl and the skeleton is particularly distracting as is the lightness of the sword running off the canvas at bottom left. All easily tweaked in the next stage.

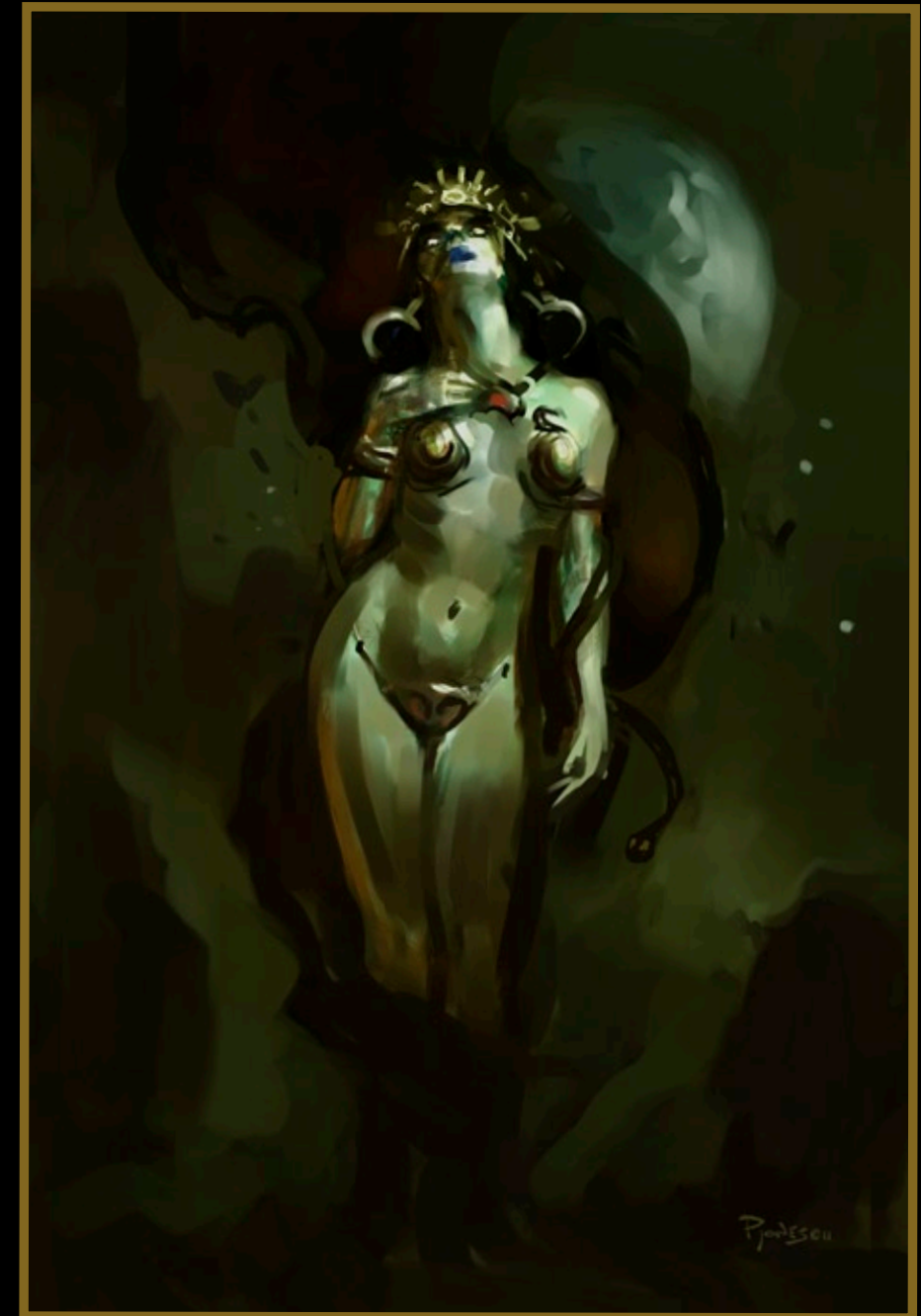


The glazing stage gives me the chance to not only intensify the colour but also to balance the darks and lights to create a lush and atmospheric artwork. If you were working in Photoshop this would be akin to painting colour onto a Multiply layer combined with colour painted onto an Overlay layer above the artwork. Although my colour schemes can be described as muted they actually contain lots of colour very subtly blended. The finished art is now left to dry overnight in a room that should have the doors and windows closed so as not to have people or the wind bring in dust from outside, or worse, have someone knock over or touch the drying painting.

Night of the Zombie *Art & Negotiation*



Sometimes a commission will come in with a low budget, and when you are starting out this will be a common occurrence. The main thing to do is not to moan about it, you can say 'no', it's up to you if you choose to do it or not. The problem is that a 'no' can sound like a door slamming and you may not get a call back from that client. The reverse can be just as bad, as a 'yes' can lead to constantly underpaid work. Some ad agencies would ring me up with a promise that the next job would be a 'biggie' and to treat the low budget job as a favour. Sometimes they would honour their word, other times not. This is the search and find that all budding artists and illustrators must go through until they can finally pick and choose their clients.



If that sounds grim it doesn't have to be, if you set your mind right. Regardless of what stage of your career you are at you still have the power to negotiate. You may think not, but remember, they rang you because they want your style or they think you'll work for that price, either way they would rather close the deal with you than ring someone else. To stop low budget jobs getting out of hand I charged \$30 per sketch until the idea was nailed. No one ever balked at such a small additional fee but it could sometimes rise to a tidy sum. It also helped them make up their mind sooner. I had one talented friend go out of business because his 'commissions' never got past the sketch stage. His unscrupulous 'clients' were simply using him for ideas. Beware they are out there.

Above is the color rough for this low budget private commission. I will let you in on my negotiation methods on this art and other low budget works as we progress.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



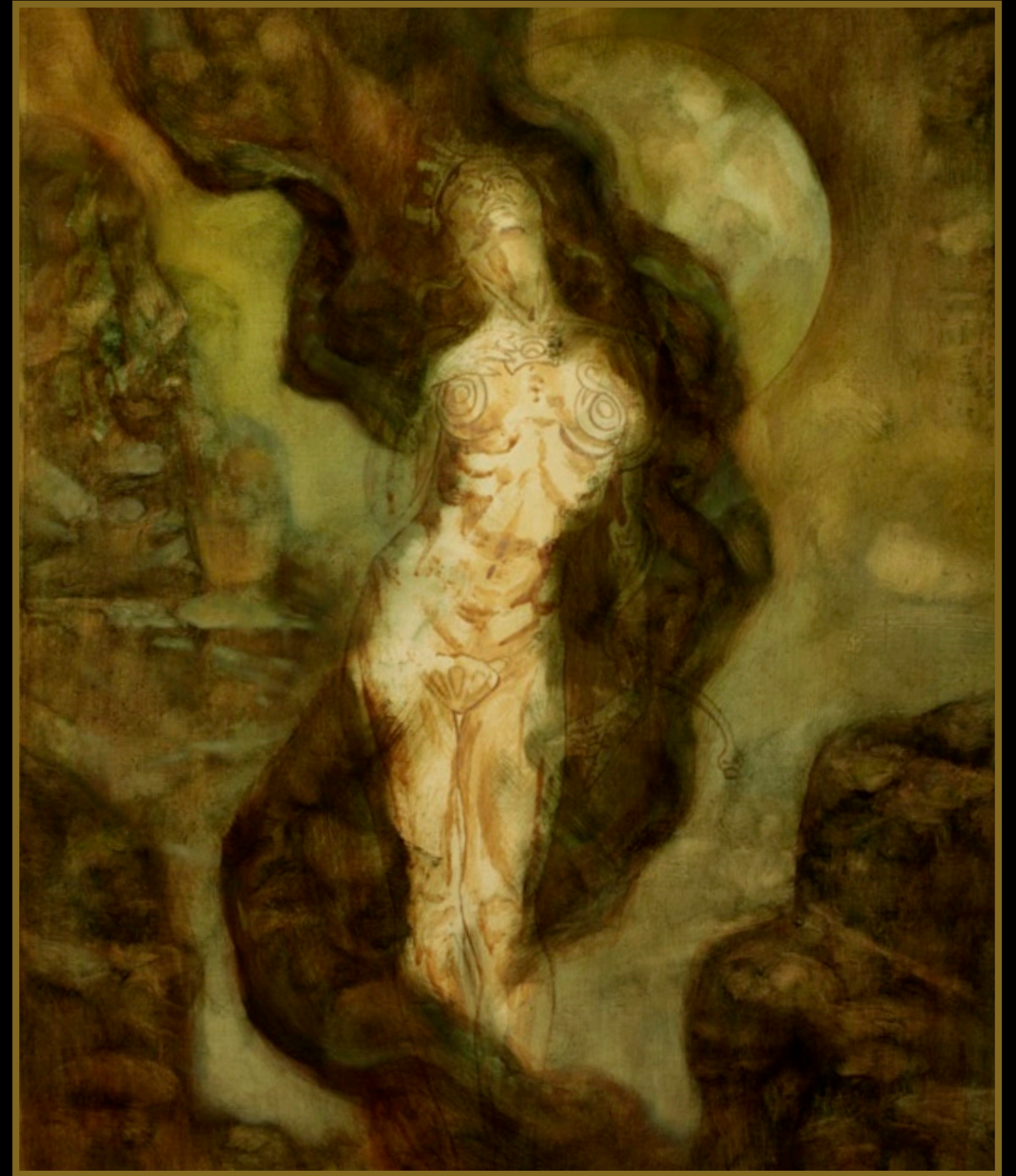
Another way to make a low budget job palatable is to ensure you retain the copyright for the future. Sometimes low fees can bring out the creative streak. Most ad agencies use a ‘work for hire’ agreement where they keep the rights. You can negotiate a lower fee where the copyright remains with you. This way they get a great piece of art for less money and you strengthen your folio with a possible further income in the future.

Frank Frazetta did exactly this back in 1954 holding onto his original cover artwork for *Weird Science-Fantasy*. In 2010 after decades of residual income from posters and prints Frank then sold the painting to a private buyer for \$380,000USD. One thought before we go further: the advice above is insanity if you are not at the top of your game, so take a good hard look at your work and ask yourself if it has legs for future sale.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



For this painting, as with all my book jacket and private commissions I retain the copyright. This is also one of the reasons I got out of advertising. Mind you, the fees for advertising illustration far outstrip the fees for publishing work. If it's quick money you are after, then advertising is the place. If you want to leave behind an art legacy it can be tricky with ad work as it is usually an unattractive product.

Artists like Norman Rockwell managed to create lasting art for ad agencies, but the world was a pettier place back then. Who hangs a picture of an office building on their gallery wall for instance? Here I also negotiated the artwork be smaller than usual, “12X19”, an open deadline, and the choice to paint whatever pose I liked with a zombie theme, and no changes, i.e. Complete freedom to paint as I please. If they say ‘no’ to your offer then you are still available in the future when they may possibly have more money, and they will also take you seriously as a professional artist.

Patrick J Jones

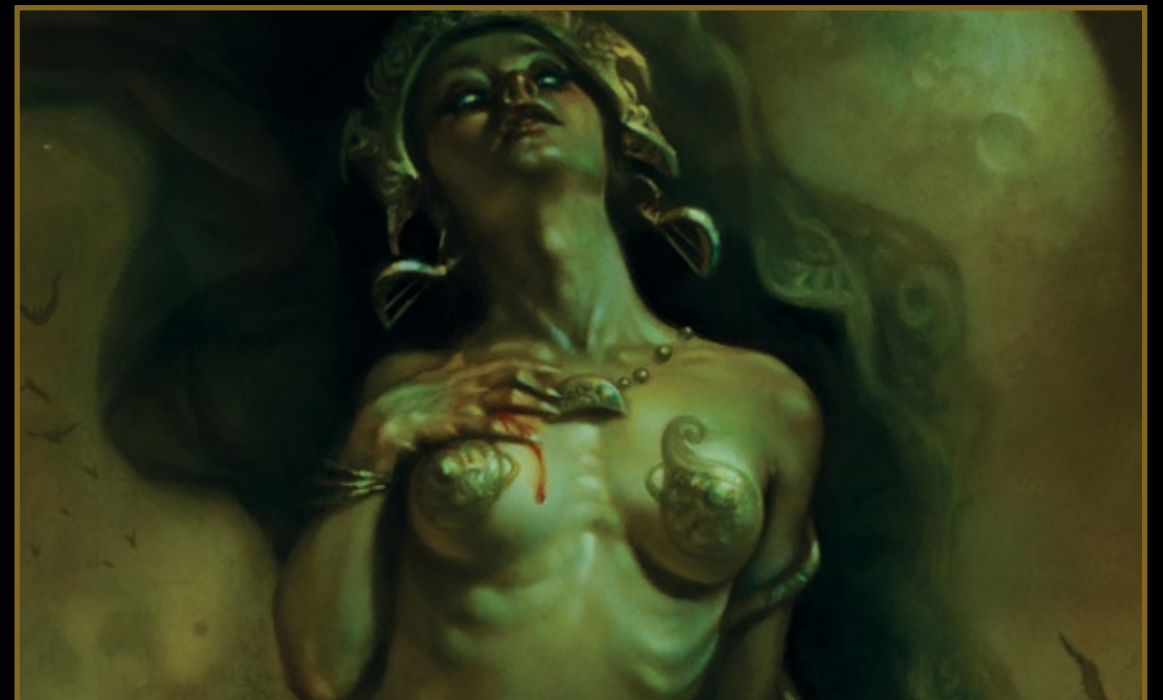
◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



The first few stages showed the color rough and underpainting. Although I showed the client the color rough out of courtesy he is aware that it can change as much as I wish. Keeping the rough abstract also allows me my own freedom to explore rather than be tied down by a tight sketch. Here as I block in I am unhappy with the zombies helmet. With a tight sketch approved by a publisher I would have to stick to the sketch and live with it, but due to my negotiation I can change it at will. Remember, if you work on a small piece like this it would be a mistake to use canvas as the weave would make it impossible to get detail into the face. This artwork is on gessoed illustration board and lightly sanded for a smooth finish that still has enough tooth to hold the oils. As the painting is very small I can block the whole thing in a single day. I'm blocking in again with 70%/30% white spirt/linseed oil mix to thin my paints.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
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Above are both the blended stage and the colour glazed stage. At this point the painting is in a state of flux. I'm Amixing traditional 50/50 turpentine with linseed oil here as detail at this size needs a good oily vehicle to make the paint flow. When using a toxic thinner I usually make sure the room is ventilated, but with the hot weather I'm working in an air conditioned environment. This is when it's essential to use dippers with lids to hold the medium. This way the medium is exposed to the air just briefly as I open and close the lids only when I need to mix color.

If I was working on a large canvas though I would open the windows and doors and brave the heat rather than breath the turpentine fumes. Double bowl metal dippers clip onto your palette. They are cheap and available at all art stores. In one bowl I have my oil medium for painting and in the other odorless spirit or turpentine to rinse my brushes.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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I'm using my 50/50 linseed/turpentine mix to glaze. If you choose Artists' Turpentine and follow the safety tips I share throughout this book on the use of solvents then you should have little to worry about. One last safety tip is don't play it cheap by buying unrefined solvent from hardware stores, it will be detrimental to your health, and your artwork. It was cheap turps that spelled the end for the great Frank Frazetta, starting with a thyroid condition and ending in a series of strokes.

My safety advice may be considered as histrionic by safety experts as the small amount of solvent artists generally use is deemed no more dangerous than using common household cleaning products... but we only get one set of lungs.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Some artists choose to use only Linseed at this stage but I find it much too glossy and almost impossible to add any amount of pigment to without the pigment breaking up. 50% odorless spirt mixed in will solve this problem but turpentine is the classic mix for it's flowing properties and I'll use it when working on very small details. Another problem with using too much Linseed oil is that it takes a long time to dry, attracts dust, and can cause paintings to yellow over time. A good way to glaze without these problems is to oil out first as described before and keep brushing until it's spread as miserly as you can get it. You'll be surprised how far it can go. Hold the painting at an angle to see if you've missed any by checking the gloss. You now have a great surface to paint on that will be workable for hours. As always, be careful if using solvent rather than turps as it's more likely to pick up previous layers if brushed too much.

When this commission was finished I calculated that because of the small size I had painted it so much quicker than my larger pieces that the cost came out around the same per hour, so nothing was really lost money-wise and I had the freedom to paint what I pleased and the buyer got his bargain. That's the power of negotiation

The Captive *Illustration as Art*



When I started working as a young illustrator in London I became aware that illustration was viewed by some as the inferior cousin to fine art because it ‘illustrates’ another person’s idea (i.e. a book illustration), and is work painted to a deadline by clock-watchers for money, and therefore can’t possess a soul. I believe this is pure snobbery, after all the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo (1475-1564) illustrated stories from the bible (a book) and was commissioned by the church (the client), yet it’s regarded as the height of fine art. For me if the final work was painted with passion and imbued with your personal vision, then it’s art, pure and simple.

Here I will create a painting for the love of it (fine art) under a self-imposed ten day deadline, based on a story brief (illustration), from myself (the client), treating it as both illustration and fine art, to prove there is no difference. I have shown this artwork to a class of art students and everyone had a different interpretation of what the backstory might be. I’ll leave the story a mystery so that you can draw your own interpretation.



Illustrators usually complete paintings within time limits that would cause a fine artist to faint. This is why most illustrators choose fast drying acrylic over oil paints. But acrylics simply can’t blend like oils and so ironically it will take longer to produce blended flesh using acrylics.

Using illustration board as a base I transferred a reverse tracing paper sketch by burnishing the back with a spoon. It’s important that the board’s surface has no invisible oil marks before transfer and a wipe over with tissue soaked in spirit will do the trick. Next I use acrylic paint (burnt sienna) to quickly block in the underpainting. After twenty minutes dry time I seal the porous board with acrylic medium (Liquitex Matte) and spread it out with an art store sponge brush to prevent brush strokes. I also lift off any excess with a paper towel as I go. Once dry I lay down a second coat the same way. The surface is now sealed, leaving a slight tooth to hold the following oil paint. The art size is 28”X19” and is my average size art as it fits the budget of most collectors better than my large canvases.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here is my colour rough. You can see everything here in miniature, the value, the colour, the mood. If you squint your eyes you can almost see the final art. At this point I can approach the modeling stage with the confidence that the oil painting is worth going through with.



As I'm my own cheapest model, I pose for the pirate, but in order not to be recognizable in every painting I change the facial features. At bottom right you can see my original profile before I added a broken nose and beard. For photoshoots I use a Canon EOS camera and EOS Utility software which means I can connect my camera to a laptop and see my poses live on full screen. With the camera and laptop facing me I can use a remote timer to take the shots with a two second alert telling me when to freeze. I cut and paste the best of numerous photos in Photoshop adding the hat and various bangles that weren't in the original shoot. I painted the nose and beard very roughly. If you look closely you can see where the extended arm and the head are pasted onto the torso. This was due to a good torso in one shot having a poorly positioned arm, etc., and so I take the best from all shots to find the perfect pose.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆
S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Now it's time to combine all the skills used in the previous artworks to pull off the most difficult type of painting: colour and value in one application. Here I'm blocking in colours of different values (lights and darks) to the background and figure simultaneously to achieve tone and colour in one sitting. I'm working from a black and white reference photo for the value and anatomy and the colour rough for colour reference. For this stage I'm using what would usually be my glazing mix of 50/50 linseed oil / turpentine to blend as I'm by-passing the usual 70/30 block-in stage mix to meet my deadline.



On the glossy surface the oils stay live all day, but are most easily blended within the first hour. In a few hours time I can come back and add some of the colors that are also seizing up on the palette and add touches here and there. By tomorrow I will be able to add another glaze on top. If you live in a damp or cold climate you may need to add some cobalt dryer to speed up the drying time. While one part of the painting is in its drying stage I'll move onto other parts of the painting. At this stage I've returned to the figure after blending to add the mark of the lash on his back and a scar across his face, adding history and a sense of danger to the character.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Again, I'm out with my anatomy books to make sure that what I see in my photo reference is not a trick of the light. I want to exaggerate the flexing muscles without straying into caricature, or worse, into the realms of bodybuilding. As always I'm trying to remain true to how these characters would look based on their history and environment. Any sign of modern day influence, such as permed or styled hair for instance, would forever destroy the illusion and mood.



Here I've repeated the one stop blocking and blending on the mermaids body that I did on the pirate. You can see I've used the natural edge ending of the torso (here ending at the arm) to complete one blending session and am now blocking the lower body. I don't bother with trinkets such as the bracelet at this stage as it will slow me down too much. What I'm aiming for is realizing the overall vision first. Adding trinkets will be easier at the end.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here we are at the end of day three. Tomorrow I will move at hyper speed as the clothing is always the fastest element to paint. You can see here that the paint is dry enough for me to rub down some pencil that was lost in the previous painting session. I keep my original drawing on tracing paper just in case and match it to register marks that line up with the burnished under drawing (I always draw register lines to mark the corners of the tracing sheet outside the art area). Oil dries slowly, but only relatively. Used thinly you can almost guarantee a dry surface at the start of each day. I've hinted at some fish scales here but know that a glazing layer will be a much easier way to tackle the sheen and rainbow colours of oily flesh and have left that kind of finish for the bangles-and-trinket detail stage.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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Although I managed to paint the pirate in tone and value during a single stage, painting pale flesh takes a much more subtle touch as artists through the ages have noted. I spent many lunch hours at the Manchester Art Gallery staring through the delicate glazes William Waterhouse (1849-1917) used to capture the radiant beauty of his water nymphs in his masterpiece, 'Hylas and the Nymphs'.

Even though glazes are normally associated with high chroma transparent colours I'm using thin white here along with blues and pinks to create flesh akin to that of a cave and undersea dweller. From this stage I'll also start on the bangles and trinkets and also the lash marks, so that the entire painting is ready to glaze and detail at the next stage.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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I've blended the mermaid flesh and left it over night to dry. I'm into day six now and ready to detail and glaze. As I completed the Pirate's hue and value already there is very little glazing needed to bring his flesh alive. You can see now the time spent layering the mermaid's flesh was well worth the effort as we now see the cold flesh, pink at the knuckles and blue in vein contrasting sharply against the bronzed flesh of her captor. This does not mean he doesn't need some pinks and blues too as you can see in the elbows and shadows..



Another day and I lay down a thin coat of medium to float some opaque paints on top of the pirate figure to bring out the form more by highlighting his muscles. I always resist the urge to over-highlight as I want the flesh to read as flesh rather than metal, which can happen. To insure I don't fall into this trap I note the highlights of the metal bangles on the mermaid are always higher in value than his flesh. You will notice his features have changed a lot since the underpainting as I felt the initial face was too sharp and refined, whereas I wanted a more gnarly, older pirate, the kind of man who has escaped death a hundred times.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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Compare this to the full plate on the previous spread. This is the end result of the first glaze and blend following that block in. I experimented a great deal on the tail and thumbed through lots of fish reference to come up with something unique. Finding reference books such as cookbooks is a far better port of call than looking at other fantasy art for reference. These books can contain birds, crabs, shells, and fish in high quality detail.



Day nine and I've glazed and detailed all day long over the entire painting. I could call it finished here, but I plan to sleep on it and go back in tomorrow for one last glaze and touch up. This should not be confused with the kind of treatment seen all too often where an artist will polish their work to death and end up with an over rendered eyesore. I'm always conscious of keeping the detail limited to where I want the viewer to look. There's no doubt now that I will meet my self-imposed deadline. How did I work it out to ten days exactly? Basically, in illustration, I always met any deadline imposed by simply writing down on a calendar a day-by-day breakdown of the various stages required to fit the time frame, then insured they were ticked each day. If I was given a fourteen day deadline (my ideal for this painting) or a six day deadline, it would still get done.

Patrick J Jones

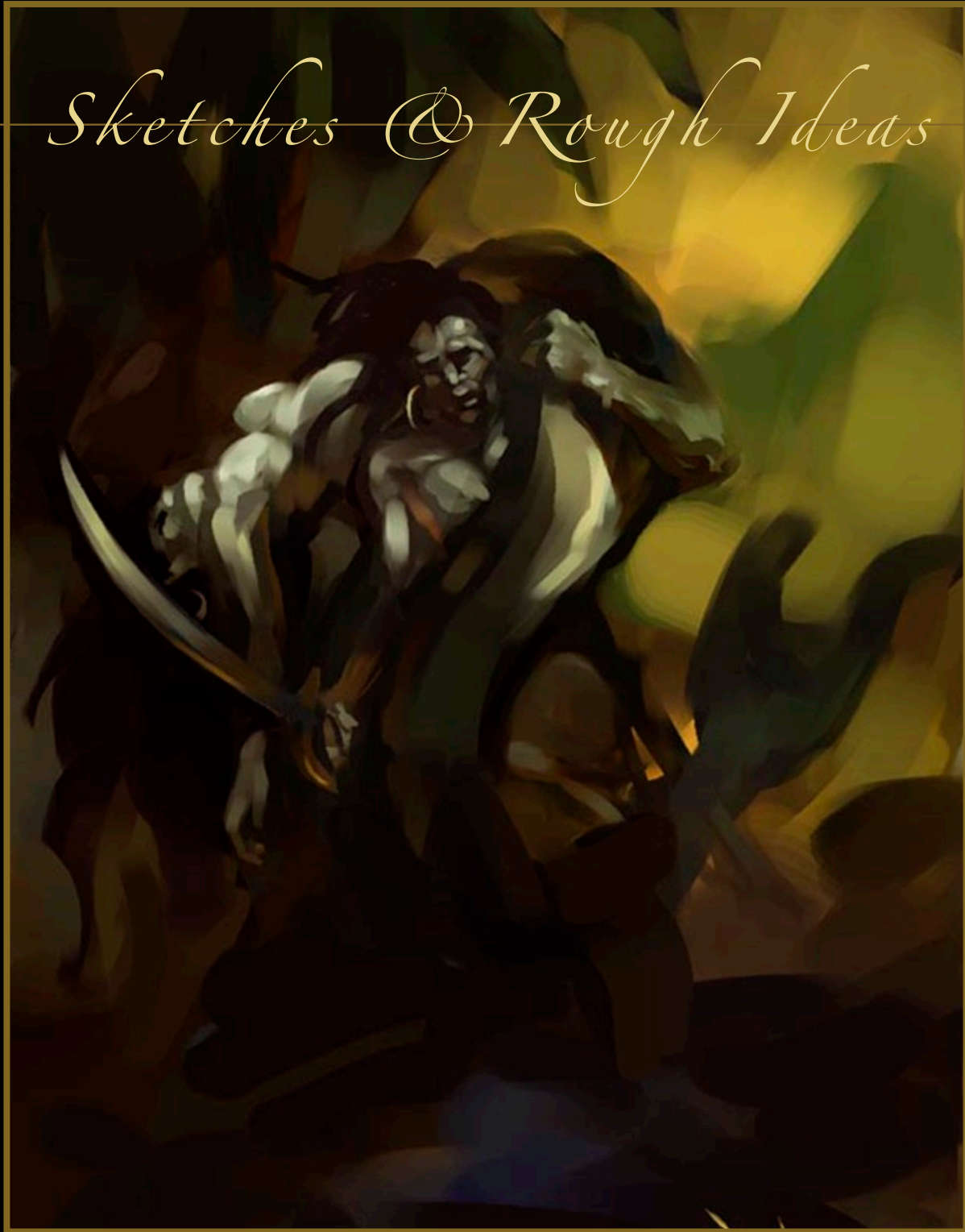
◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Here I am at the end of day ten after the final glaze and touch up. I sacrificed some of the blues and pinks in the mermaid's flesh to harmonize the painting and create a golden pool of light. The colours are still there, though not so obviously seen in reproduction. I've managed to paint a fine art, non-commissioned piece in the time frame I would normally paint an illustration, with no loss of quality. I have the painting beside me as I write this and as usual am dismayed by the limits of even the finest photography to capture the true essence of an original oil painting with it's multi-layered glazing and depth of color. It's interesting to note this painting was sold within a few weeks of completion as a work of fine art, making it financially a better option than if I'd worked on a commissioned illustration. Who knows the difference?

Sketches & Rough Ideas



Colour rough painted in preparation for a possible oil painting. These kind of ideas can lay around for years gestating before being committed to canvas. I will sometimes fool around on computer for the likes of this idea or use the day's paint palette from one of my canvases to do a quick colour sketch as the colours are already mixed and I'm in the flow. This kind of painting done in one session is known as Alla Prima.

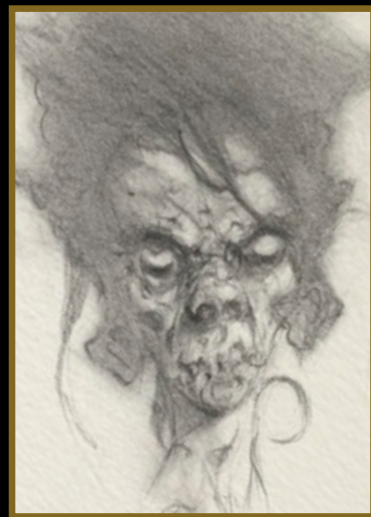


Cartoons and doodles are a fun way to warm up with a pencil, because they take the burden off the more serious stuff to come. They can also be done anywhere. The top left notebook doodles were done during a particularly mind-numbing meeting and took the edge off my waning creativity. The creepy little Space Pirate at bottom right reminded me of Cousin Eerie from the old Warren horror magazines I grew up with. Amazing what early influences stay with you and pop out of the subconscious during the cathartic act of doodling.

Pencil is a great, and in my mind, an underrated medium. There is no faster way to get an idea complete with value and blended tone onto paper. Not even computer tools can do it faster or with the same earthy quality.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP



At top is a sketchbook page. You don't have to suffer boredom if you have your sketchbook with you. Above are warm up zombie sketches for Night of the Zombie. Here I've sketched with a 2B pencil, then smudged with tissue and finally picked out highlights with a kneadable eraser. The difference between a kneadable and a standard eraser is that you can mold the kneadable eraser into small shapes, and it doesn't smudge. Windsor & Newton make my favourite brand, it's a white version as apposed to the cheaper grey versions more commonly seen.

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

SKETCHES & ROUGH IDEAS



If some doodles show promise you could scan them into computer and try some colour as in the left colour sketch above, or colour them traditionally as in the Colour oil wash on stretched watercolor paper at right, which became the painting, Alas Babylon.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P

S K E T C H E S & R O U G H I D E A S



Here are some Lost World ideas. At bottom left can be seen the earliest germ of a composition for Artemis and the Satyr. Any one of these early scribbles could lead to a final oils. The main thing is to make some initial marks and open your mind to possibilities. This sketch page is 2B pencil on paper, scanned and quickly colored on computer. If time permits I'll work on watercolor paper using thin oil or pastel. These toned sketches are given volume by using a quick technique known as Imprimatura. To do this use a mid toned surface and simply paint lights and darks to produce a value painting.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P

S K E T C H E S & R O U G H I D E A S



More rough scribbles on a toned ground for personal work or possible Lost World paintings. Attacking a major oils without scribbling at least a dozen ideas down first is madness to me as I nearly always end up with a better idea as I scribble, yet I see students skip the opportunity to explore new ideas by going to finished art with the first sketch they do, then wasting a hundred hours painting a turkey!

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

SKETCHES & ROUGH IDEAS



A rough grayscale, or Grisaille, value painting in preparation for Dawn of the Dead. I regard getting the value (lights and darks) down first is the most important element to build on for a dramatic final painting. If you think I bang this drum a lot there is good reason for it. Ignore this foundation basic at your peril!

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator
STEP • BY • STEP

SKETCHES & ROUGH IDEAS



A mixed media colour rough ideas in pencil and ink with stipple and thin oil. I'll sometimes doodle until something evolves. It may then spark a the fire needed for a major oil painting.



A quick value study. The first germ of an idea in preparation for another major Conan painting entitled, 'The Sorceress and the Pool'.



The color comp. In an unusual turn I also used this comp to try out new positioning, but decided to stay closer to the b/w comp for the final art. Worth a try with nothing lost.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P

S K E T C H E S & R O U G H I D E A S



A quick sketch scanned into Corel Painter and coloured. From this kind of doodling you can compose a narrative. Sometimes sketches can lead to stories rather than the opposite way round, which is of course what illustration is.

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

S T E P • B Y • S T E P

S K E T C H E S & R O U G H I D E A S



The more you draw the easier it gets to find ideas. Some artist/authors have written classic books that can teach you to draw without needing photo-reference. It's worth your while to seek out 'PDF art books in the public domain' on the internet. What this means is when a work reaches a certain age and the original author is no longer alive then the copyright will most likely be expired. This means the books are free to download.

I've seen Andrew Loomis books up there but as his books have recently come back into print the copyright may have been renewed, so check first. The books may be old but some are gems and will help you further with your foundation skills.

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Illustrator

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Oil Painting Gallery
Other Illustration works



Born to Kill: Private Collection: Oil on canvas board 18.5"X25"

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OIL PAINTING GALLERY

The Last Stand



Private Collection: Oil on gessoed board 18.5"X25"

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Illustrator

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OIL PAINTING GALLERY

Alas Babylon



Oil on gessoed board 12"X18"

Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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O I L P A I N T I N G G A L L E Y

Song of the Siren



Fantasy Art House Gallery, Idiana: Oil on canvas 36"X48"

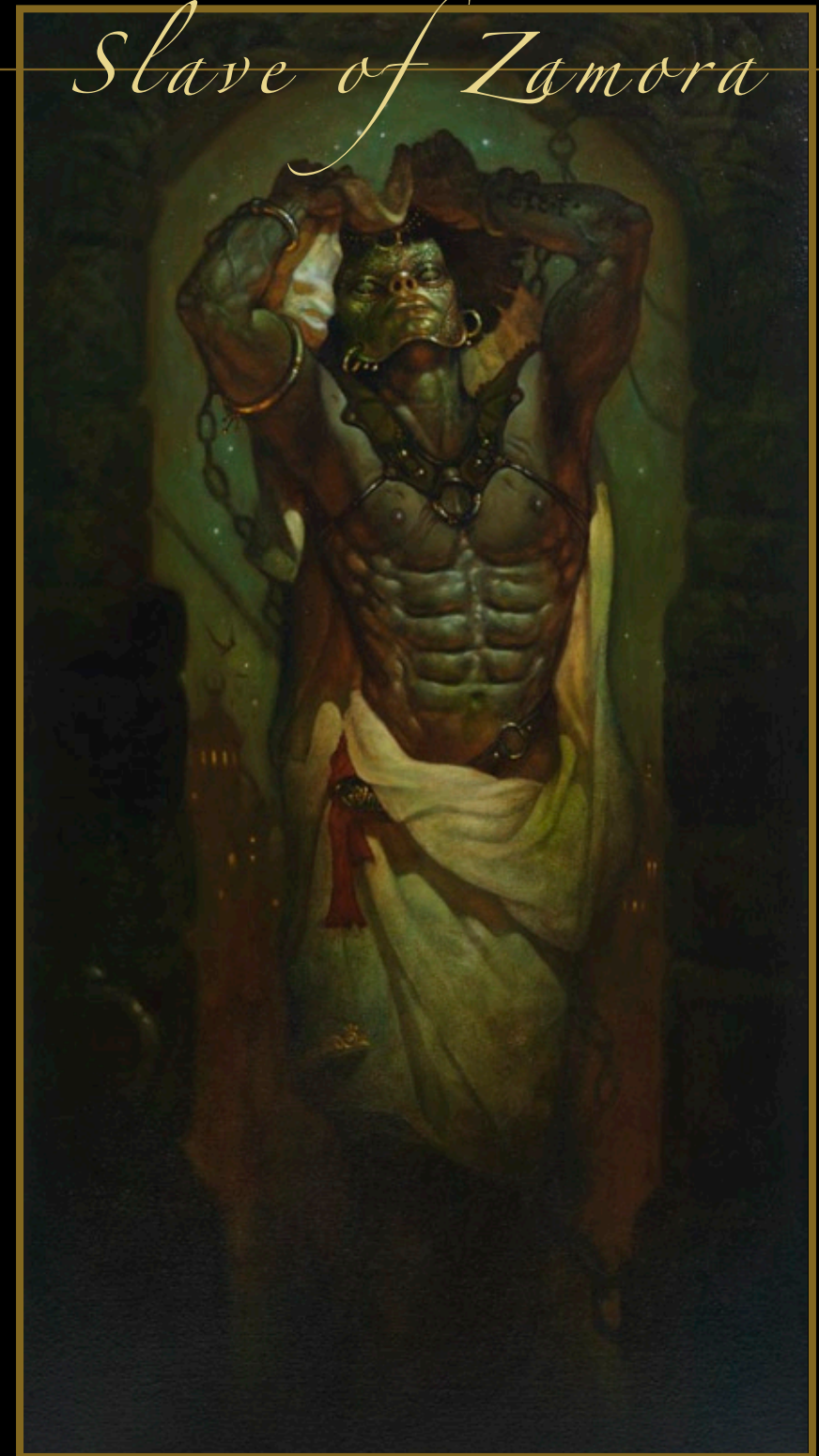
Patrick J Jones

◆ I l l u s t r a t o r ◆

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O I L P A I N T I N G G A L L E Y

Slave of Zamora



Fantasy Art House Gallery, Idiana: Oil on canvas 21.5"X45"

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Illustrator

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OIL PAINTING GALLERY

The Sorceress and the Pit



Private Collection: Oil on canvas 36"X24"

192

Patrick J Jones

Illustrator

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OIL PAINTING GALLERY

The Lost Treasure



Private Collection: Oil on canvas 36"X24"

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Solomon's Loss

The return of the Victorian Epic



At 30"x40" 'Solomon's Loss' is huge by illustration and print standards today but would be regarded as a small piece by Victorian fine art standards, when representational art (ie: not abstract) was at its peak of glory. Back then artists such as Lord Frederic Leighton (1858-1931) and Hans Makart (1840-1884) painted canvases of staggering sizes. The great Victorian artists were akin to Hollywood stars, masters of public spectacle and mass entertainment with hundreds of thousands paying to see their latest works at the annual Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. Unfortunately their popularity came to an abrupt end with the rise of Modern Art and Cinema. For the last century Victorian art was ridiculed as kitsch by art curators with an eye to keeping Modern Art priced at outrageous figures. Illustrator Al Capp (1909-1979) put it more bluntly: 'Abstract art is a product of the untalented sold by the unprincipled to the utterly bewildered'. Today Victorian art is being reevaluated for its uncompromising beauty with Alma Tadema's *The Finding of Moses* recently selling for \$35, 922,000 . Considering the painting was bought solely for its \$900 frame in 1955, before being dumped in an alley as worthless, signals a major tide is turning.

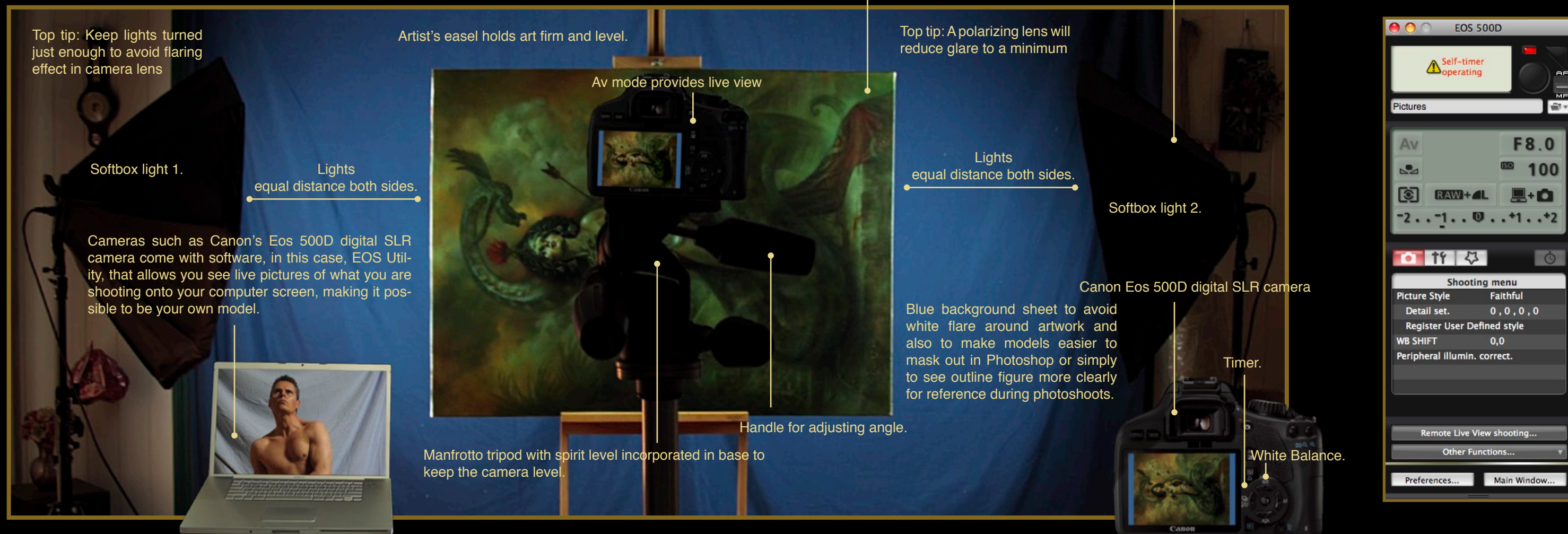


If you are going for epic art and epic scale I've discovered that a dismantled canvas frame 42" at it's tallest wood strut is a problem to transport by hand as art tubes with carry handles are too short to hold a much longer length without having to saw the strut in two (a landscape 42" high can be any width though, as you just keep rolling). To transport large canvases to a show I recommend PVC plumber's piping from hardware stores to hold and protect your canvas and dismantled frame pieces. They can then be placed inside commercial art tubes with handles. The PVC piping is practically indestructible (art tubes are not) and can be capped at both ends with caps sold alongside the pipes in store. I also use these PVC pipes to post rolled canvas safely to collectors.

The future looks bright again for painters of beauty and truth. Heartfelt dreams and visions placed on canvas with oil and brush, grown from the seed of a colour sketch, to a full blown oil on canvas to be treasured by collectors the world over...

Photographing Artwork & Models

Top tip: A 50mm lens will keep proportions true



Photographing artwork, especially varnished artwork, can be a nightmare and I've tried every way I can to reach a method that works for me. Here it is: I use two soft boxes to avoid burning out highlights that harsher, less diffused lights tend to do. I shoot the art in a dark room and have attached a polarizing lens to my camera to cut glare to a minimum. The camera is an EOS 500D with a 50mm lens, which keeps the artwork proportions from warping. This is the lens I also use for shooting models to keep their anatomy as true as possible. My ISO setting for shooting artwork is 100 for capturing detail, but for models I change the ISO setting to 1600 to prevent any movement from the models resulting in a blurred image.

Most professional tips will tell you to place your lights behind the camera at 45° angles pointing at the artwork, but I always get glare. What you are looking at here are the lights placed equidistant and directly at each side of the art, with the method being that each light will cancel any shadows of weave or paint produced by the other. This I find is the best method for crisp, clear imagery. The only problem here is that you will still get highlights. These I 'spot out' with the spot healing brush in Photoshop. Alternatively you can do a 'one hit fix' with the Photoshop filter 'dust & scratches' but I find it softens the art details. Another method that works is to reflect the lights off the ceiling rather than at the artwork, this will give less glare but at the pearl of less sharpness in detail.

Top tip: Before photographing art I sweep it over with a soft velvet clothes brush to remove dust and hair.

Top tip: Softbox lights are great for diffusing the harshness of direct light and are also useful for photographing models as they don't burn out highlights so much.

Above right is a screen from my 'live shooting mode' which shows the F-stop and camera speed etc., that I've found best to get just the right amount of detail without being too sharp or too fuzzy. Between F8-14 works best but you might like to experiment more. Make sure your camera and art are level using a spirit level. If you have a wooden floor you can use the floorboard lines to place the feet of the easel and the feet of the tripod flush. I find shooting against a blue background stops the flare effect of a white background at the edge of the artworks and also gives me less trouble than black with color balance. Shooting in Av, Raw+Large mode will take a lot of memory but will give you maximum detail. Once I set the camera on a two second timer I'm assured the camera won't shake during the exposure, which may last a second or two. You need to shoot a close up of a white card when your lights are set up then save this setting to your custom white balance before shooting your art using the custom white balance mode (check your camera guide book for details on custom settings). I'm far from a pro photographer but these methods have given me good results.

Note: Live shooting mode can be enabled in your camera settings so that when you attach your camera to your laptop it will show live images on your computer screen making it ideal for posing for your own art. With the computer screen facing me in front of the camera I can use a remote timer to give me a few seconds to perfect and hold the pose.

An Artist's Studio

The MacBook Pro and 6"X11" intuos 3. Being the same ratio they pack neatly into a laptop shoulder bag. Perfect travelling companions when on the road.

My giant-sized intuos 4 tablet; a prize won in Massive Black's 'Newborn' challenge, awarded for my Corel Painter Frankenstein art (taped at top right of my painting easel).

Canon EOS 50 mm lens, perfect for shooting flat artworks and models.

Portfolio



So here is my studio nearing the end of writing this book. The studio is split down the middle, one side digital one side traditional. My workstation is a Mac Pro and non-glare Cinema Display. Under the desk is a hub of technology: printer, external hard drives, back up disks, etc., everything I need to preserve a record of the paintings before they leave the studio.

At present I'm colour correcting a photo of 'Artemis and the Satyr' to keep as a digital file before the art is shipped to the Atlas Gallery in Indiana (the original oil painting still hangs on the wall on the traditional studio side, for now). On the walls are prints of artworks already completed and sent to their new homes overseas.

Every few years I buy Boris Vallejo's art book masterpiece, 'Mirage' and slice out the pages for inspiration until they deteriorate. This is my favorite, 'Vampire's Kiss'— the benchmark in oil painting!

Here are three steps to a Boris painting, to remind me how easy this should be. It never is.

Mr. Bones

ipod dock

Anatomy model

Photo Reference

Mixing palette



One of two bookshelves stuffed with art books, reference books and anatomy books.

'The Captive' at midway stage surrounded by reference.

Mahl Stick

This portable easel holds reference books in between my life drawing and Fantasy Masterclasses.

'The Sacrifice' is drying on my reference easel before being shipped to the Allentown museum in the U.S. for the 'At the Edge: Art of the Fantastic' exhibition.

For inspiration I surround myself with art by great artists, and also my own art to make sure I'm constantly improving.

Art station containing drawers full of paints, tape, pencils, etc...

A Summary of Methods Mediums

So I've come to the end of an examination of my own working methods and left the reader a choice in various techniques in oils. What variation you choose will depend on your personal temperament, or deadlines if you are already a professional illustrator. Here is a breakdown of my personal pros and cons in a nutshell:

Water Mixable Oils (Winsor&Newton) Pros and Cons:

Pros:

1. They are clean, simple to use, and tack up pretty fast making them a little like blendable Acrylics.
2. They give off no harmful fumes so good if you work, say, in a small apartment.
3. They clean with soap and water.
4. You can treat them like regular oils by adding various amounts of turps/spirits/linseed oil. Although this negates buying them for their water-mixable qualities it might be a good way to ease into oil painting if you are used to water based paints.
5. Per tube they are cheaper than traditional oil paints, and with your main solvent being water this make water-mixable paints a good budget option.
6. No headaches.

Cons:

1. As they tack-up pretty fast they tend to create more drag on your brush, which is not good for expensive sable brushes and also the blend is not as smooth or as easy to achieve as with traditional oils.
2. Ironically on a day by day basis they can take longer to dry than traditional oils and are less predictable in their overall drying times.
3. They are a lower grade oil pigment, and as water is not a great binder some colours break up into what looks like soot floating in milk, needing remixing, particularly one of my favourites, Olive Green.
4. Colours tend to thicken in their tubes making them harder to squeeze out over time. Note: This is from my own personal experience working in a sub tropical climate.
5. Water evaporates quickly therefore your palette colours soon need rewetting and if you over-wet you could lift the previous colour.
6. Their stickiness attracts dust and hairs.

Alkyds (Griffin) Pros and Cons:

Pros:

1. Fast drying with each coat ready to work on top of the following day (using thin colour).
2. Higher quality pigment than water-mixable oils
3. Very good glazing qualities
4. No problems mixing with traditional oils and other thinners and oil mediums used in oil painting.

Cons:

1. A bit sticky at the blending stage
2. Brushes wear out due to the drag caused by the fast drying properties.
3. Need good studio ventilation to prevent headaches.

Traditional Oils (Winsor&Newton) Pros and Cons:

Pros:

1. Outstanding quality with a long proven history of longevity.
2. Superb blending qualities.
3. Long drying time leaves the artist time to cover large areas that can be worked into over many hours.
4. Great flowing qualities that help keep brushes from wearing out so fast.

Cons:

1. May dry too slowly for some painting methods such as layering.

A Summary of Methods Solvents

White Spirits Pros and Cons:

Pros:

1. Less hazardous fumes than Artists' Turpentine.
2. Cheaper than Artists' Turpentine.
3. Speeds up drying time (if this is what you like).

Cons:

1. Can pick up underlying colour if not careful.
2. Doesn't have the superior flow of Artists' Turpentine.
3. Speeds up drying time (not good for my methods because I like a long drying time).
4. Need good studio ventilation to prevent headaches.

Artists' Turpentine Pros and Cons:

Pros:

1. Gives oil paints that 'melted butter' flow that makes oil painting so fantastic.
2. Slows down drying time.
3. Less likely to pick up underlying colour than White Spirits.

Cons:

1. More Hazardous fumes than White Spirits.
2. More expensive than White Spirits.
5. Need good studio ventilation to prevent headaches.

Note: Odorless versions of turps and spirits are still just as toxic.

Painting stages and oil/solvent mixing ratios:

Underpainting stage consistency:

1. For acrylic thinned with water to an ink consistency add 90% water
2. For water mixible oils thinned with water to an ink consistency add 90% water
3. For traditional oils thinned with spirits or turpentine to an ink consistency add 90% solvent

Block-in stage consistency:

1. For oils thinned to a face cream consistency add 70% spirits or turpentine mixed with 30% linseed oil
(also spread the mix as thin as possible on the surface before applying paint to improve brush flow. Make sure previous layer is dry first.)

Glazing stage consistency:

1. For oils thinned to a melted butter consistency add 50% spirits or turpentine mixed with 50% linseed oil.
(also spread the mix as thin as possible on the surface before applying paint to improve brush flow. Make sure previous layer is dry first.)

If I had the choice of only one technique from the list above it would be oils and turpentine mixed with linseed oil using sable brushes. The perfect painting surface for my technique is a smooth gessoed panel. The reason is the flow of turpentine mixed oils on a smooth surface gives my style the best chance of success in that it blends smoothly and easily for skin tones and also makes detailing easier. The major drawback is the storage and weight of panel make for a cumbersome load that is not easy to export, whereas canvas is light, can be stripped from its support, rolled into a tube and easily shipped overseas.

PJONES007

The Elements of Style

Parting Words

I remember the first time someone told me they recognized my work by its style. Until then I didn't think I had a style. I found my style via the same route as most artists, not by living in a vacuum unspoiled by the influence of others, but by the reverse. To find a style of your own I recommend the study of great artists and let their various influences work their magic on your subconscious, let it create an artistic stew, then break free with that mix of knowledge to make your own individual mark.

But artists like Frank Frazetta had a totally unique style you say? Yes he had, and you can tell a Frazetta at a glance, but he personally cited influences in his work such as Hal Foster, N.C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle and Allen St John. Knowing this and seeing their influence in his work does not make Frank's work any less powerful to me, as it's obvious that he must have followed the normal artist's journey to find his own style. His personal input after studying these great artists was just so brilliant that his work appeared, on a surface level, to have no previous influence attached. On the flip side when an artist consciously tries to create a style before they learn to paint, the opposite usually happens, in that their style looks like a mishmash of other artists, which, ironically, is the only logical conclusion of that method.

For anatomy and bold colour I study Boris Vallejo, for dynamic composition and fearless brushwork, Frank Frazetta, for gritty atmosphere I admire Donato Giancola, for magic and light I look to the The Heidebrandt Brothers. All my life I've studied great artists such as Sanjulian, Segrelles, Waterhouse, Allen St John, Roy Krenkle, N.C. Wyeth, Al Williamson, Brom, Jeff Jones, Lord Leighton, Alma Tadema, Leon Gerome', and hundreds more. If any of these artists are new to you I recommend you discover their work. Find artists you admire for their various skills, and they need not necessarily be fantasy artists, in fact I urge you to study outside the stable of fantasy artists. Some great non-fantasy artists that I greatly admire include: Norman Rockwell (the early years), John Singer Sergeant, Delacroix, David Roberts and The Orientalists, and The Neoclassicists. Study all great artists, absorb what they teach, add your own passion and ideas and you will naturally develop a style all your own.

At the end of the day there is only one honest way to develop a style that will define your work and that is to study hard, hone your craft, and work with passion. Do this and your unique style will find you. I wish you luck...

PJONES

PJONES 2010

Glossary

Alla Prima Painting: Completing a painting in a single session or while the paint is still wet.

Alkyd: Synthetic resin used in paints and mediums to speed drying time.

Chiaroscuro: A method of painting that represents boldly contrasting lighting, usually drawing highlights out of a dark scene.

Chroma: The degree of brilliance in color

Fat-Over-Lean: The rule of painting in layers in which each successive layer of paint should have more oil than the preceding layer, to reducing the risk of cracking.

Gesso: White medium applied as a ground to stop oil being absorbed by porous surfaces.

Glaze: A film of transparent color laid over a dried underpainting.

Grisaille: Monochromatic painting usually in various tones of gray.

Ground: The surface on which color is applied.

Highlight: The lightest tone in a painting.

Hue: Term for a particular color, for example: a hue of bluish green or redish purple.

Impasto: Painting thickly with a bristle brush or palette knife in order to create surface texture.

Imprimatura: A stain of oil color that is applied to the entire surface to create a unifying midtone from which to paint lights and darks, producing a full

value painting.

Lightfast: Resistant to fading when exposed to sunlight.

Liquin: Fast drying medium useful for glazing.

Local Color: The true or actual color of an object uninfluenced by light or atmospheric conditions .

Mahl Stick: A wooden stick with a pad tied to one end used to steady the hand when working on fine details.

Medium: A liquid additive used to control the application properties of paint, for example: oils, varnishes, solvents, and driers.

Modeling: Creating the illusion of volume by painting the effects of light and shadow on form.

Palette: Surface upon which a painter holds or mixes his colors. Or a selection of colors chosen to paint with.

Palette knife: A flexible knife made of tempered steel for mixing colours on the palette. Can also be used to apply paint.

Pastels: Quality sticks of dry colour containing very little binder.

Pigment: A substance or powder that makes up the color of a paint. Pigments can be derived organically from plant or animal sources or from salts and metallic oxides such as ochre or cobalt blue.

Prime / Primer: To cover a surface with a preparatory coat of color.

Scumbling: Scraping, scrubbing or dragging paint over an underpainting with a brush or rag.

Sfumato: Derived from the Italian word for smoked sfumato is a subtle blending used to produce a hazy effect.

Stipple: Applying small dots of colour with the point of a brush .

Tone: The lightness or darkness of a color.

Underpainting: Preliminary painting, over which layers of color are added. Can be monochrome or colored.

Value: Degree of light and dark.

Varnish: Protective surface film imparting a glossy or matt surface appearance to a painting.

Verdaccio: Greenish underpainting.

Volatile: Evaporating rapidly or easily.

Wash: A thin application of diluted color.

White Spirits: A thinner used with oil paints to replace Turpentine. Can be bought as odorless spirit.

Yellowing: An effect on oil paintings caused by one of three reasons: excessive use of linseed oil medium, applying varnishes prone to yellow with age, or an accumulation of dirt embedded into varnish.

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Sci-fi & Fantasy OIL PAINTING TECHNIQUES

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For a complete list of downloadable sf & Fantasy DVD tutorials, gleece prints, original art and more books in this step by step series go to:
www.pjartworks.com

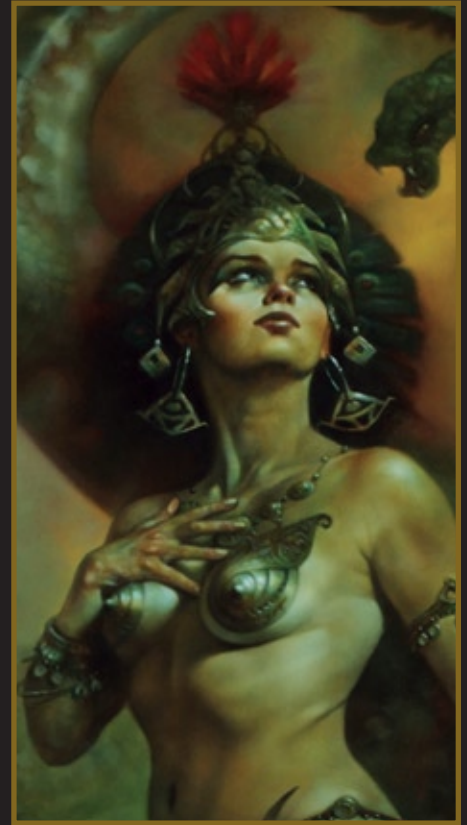
In memory of Frank Frazetta: (1928-2010)

Patrick J Jones

Sci-fi & Fantasy

I l l u s t r a t o r

S T E P • B Y • S T E P



Award winning SF & Fantasy illustrator, Patrick J. Jones's educational movies and ebooks have been downloaded via his online store by students and teachers from most every nation on Earth. Now for the first time Patrick has accumulated the bulk of his recent oil painting art tutorials into this single volume to share incredible insight into his life as an artist and his unique working methods. Inside these pages contain the secrets of painting Conan, mermaids and otherworldly creatures, from pencil to finished art. No serious student of SF & Fantasy art or oil painting techniques can afford to miss this book— so take a private seat in Patrick's Masterclass and learn how to create fantastic art!

Patrick has worked for most major SF & Fantasy publishers and film companies worldwide including the likes of Lucasfilm and Disney Studios. He has painted covers for many prestigious authors, including Simon R. Green and H.G. Wells, and has worked as a Concept Artist for movies such as Peter Pan and The Great Raid. His original oil paintings reside art galleries and in the homes of private collectors worldwide. Patrick also teaches a Masterclass in SF & Fantasy art at government and Private campuses on the Gold Coast and Brisbane, Australia.

I expect to be impressed by every piece that comes out of the hands of Patrick. His control of the paint and brushes is truly amazing. His technique is impeccable...'

Boris Vallejo

Patrick has a fire and a passion in his art that very few have. His understanding of anatomy, design, composition and lighting is excellent. His technique and style are brilliant. But mostly his art is magical...'

Greg Hilderandt

Luscious color! That's the first thing I think when I see one of Patrick's paintings. Then my eyes roam around and see the silky skin of the characters, the intricate design work of their ornamentation...'

Julie Bell

Patrick is a phenomenal artist, equally versed in both traditional and digital methods... as well as a wonderful teacher.'

Dan Dos Santos

Blazing with color and heroics, Patrick's paintings capture the best of what Science Fiction and Fantasy has to offer- deft draftsmanship, killer compositions and sensual atmospheres. It is a thrill to see what he will unveil next from the studio...'

Donato Giancola

Bringing his unique blend of exquisite color sense and delicate value control to everything from science fiction to classical mythology, Patrick paints for both the book cover and the museum wall...'

Pat Wilshire, IlluXCon Co-Founder